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**"Romanos rerum dominos, gentemque togatam." VIRGIL.**

1821.



221. g. 133

**C. Baldwin, Printer,  
New Bridge-Street, London.**

# DEDICATION.

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TO

**MR. DE LA ROCHE,**

**DIRECTOR OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE AT CAEN,  
IN NORMANDY, &c. &c. &c.**

**SIR,**

**THERE** are but few occupations in which a man may be more worthily, or more honorably, engaged, than in the education of youth : nor any, in which the conscientious discharge of its arduous and important duties, deserves more of public regard and private acknowledgment.

The distinguished manner in which you fill the situation of Superior of the great seminary over which you preside, entitles you to that large share of consideration

which you hold in the general estimation ; and the truly paternal care which you have bestowed on the education of my sons—the deepest obligation that can be conferred on a parent—demands from me, personally, the warmest expression of my thanks.

In dedicating this work to you, Sir, I, therefore, only perform a duty ; and I beg you to accept of it, as a feeble testimony of the respect, and a slight tribute of the gratitude, with which I have the honor to be,

Your most devoted,

and obedient servant,

THE AUTHOR.

*London,*  
31st May, 1821.

## PREFACE.

---

It has often been remarked that, amongst all the laboured volumes which have been written on the subject of the antiquities of the Romans, we possess no compendious account of their domestic customs alone; and that, although every well-educated person is acquainted with the Roman history, but few have an accurate idea of Roman manners. It is, indeed, only to be acquired by toiling through a variety of authors with which the generality of readers are but imperfectly acquainted; and ladies, in particular, are deterred from the study by the classical allusions and the learned quotations in which the subject has been usually envelopped.

It, therefore, occurred to the Author, that a concise account of the state of society in ancient Rome, clothed in plain language, divested, as far as possible, of Latin terms, and pruned of all subjects which offend against delicacy, could not fail to be serviceable to young persons of both sexes who are completing their education; and might, perhaps, not prove unacceptable to some of riper years. He claims no other merit in the execution of the task he has undertaken, than that of having attentively compared various authorities, and of having recorded such facts, only, as are either incontestably established, or generally received. The learned reader will, indeed, discover some on which a difference of opinion exists among the best informed commentators; but, as it was not the Author's object to enter into any discussion respecting them, he has adopted, without remark, that which appeared to him the most entitled to preference. It may also be objected, that many of the instances he has adduced are

trite; that the quotations from the poets are too numerous; and, that he has omitted some prominent features in the Roman character. But, an historical work must necessarily contain allusions to facts already known; the poets have only been introduced when the author conceived that they would elucidate the subject with more advantage than he could himself; and, for the omission of scenes, often disgusting in themselves, and from which neither valuable information could be derived, nor any moral inference deduced, no apology is deemed necessary.

The chief matter has been extracted from a French work of long-standing reputation, the production of Professor d'Arnay, a gentleman well known to the literary world in the department of the belles lettres. The other modern works to which the Author is the most indebted, are, "Kennet," "Potter," and "Dr. Alexander Adam, on Roman Antiquities;" the splendid publication of Count Caylus on the same

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### ERRATA.

- Page 68, Line 2, *for sex, read sect.*  
— 154, — 15, *for Thermes, read Thermæ.*  
— 157, — 22, *for thermes, read Thurmus.*  
— 179, — 7, and } *for Comessatio, read Commissatio.*  
— 202, — 26, }  
— 215, — 3, *for jewellery, read jewelry.*  
— 217, — 1, *for freemen, read freed-men.*  
— 291, — 1, *for it, read its.*

**SKETCHES**  
**OF THE**  
**DOMESTIC MANNERS**  
**AND**  
**INSTITUTIONS**  
**OF**  
**THE ROMANS.**

---

**CHAP. I.**

State of Society in ancient Rome.—Agriculture.—Quintus Cincinnatus : Marcus Curius : Scipio Africanus : Cato the Censor.—Market-Days.—Civil Dissensions.—Progress of Luxury.—Change of Manners.—Slaves.—Oppian Law.—Corruption of the Government.

**THE** occupations and the manners of domestic society are usually influenced by men's fortunes: accordingly, those of the Romans varied at different periods of their history.

Under their kings, the ordinary wants of life, and the dangers of war, divided their cares during a period of two hundred and forty-four years,

Under the consuls, when they were not occupied in foreign warfare, their attention was engaged at home by the more dangerous evil of domestic strife. A struggle for power on the part of the patricians, and for independence on that of the plebeians, kept Rome in an almost constant state of division and of agitation, which arose not so much from reciprocal animosity, as from the ill-conduct of men in place—from the ambitious designs of the consuls, and the seditious enterprises of the tribunes. The interference of the senate was often employed to check these dissensions, and a timely relaxation of its authority sometimes prevented the excesses to which the people might otherwise have been hurried: but this condescension was not unfrequently abused, and only palliated, without curing the evil.

Rome, therefore, convulsed by turns, by internal discord, and foreign hostility, only enjoyed repose at intervals. This leisure was devoted to agriculture, in which all classes were then equally occupied; and the patrician and plebeian orders, so distinct in the city, were confounded, in the country, in the common avocations of husbandry.

The first magistrates, and the greatest gene-

rals, were engaged in the labours of the field; and the same hand which directed the plough was often chosen to guide the helm of the state, or to wield the truncheon of its armies. History presents us with many such examples, not only during the infancy of the commonwealth, but even in those more flourishing times when the Romans, already masters of all Italy, had extended their empire beyond the seas. Quintus Cincinnatus, who was found at work in his field by those who went to announce to him his appointment to the dictatorship, is not a singular instance. M. Curius, after having conquered the Sabines, and the Samnites, and after having driven Pyrrhus out of Italy, possessed only a small farm which he cultivated himself. Cato the Censor, struck with the simplicity of manners, and the elevation of mind, of its master, adopted him as his model; and applying himself to agriculture,—on which he has left some treatises,—did not disdain to work with his slaves, nor, when their toil was over, to partake of their coarse fare. And Scipio Africanus, after he had signalized himself by the defeat of the greatest of the Carthaginian generals,—after having conquered Hannibal, and rendered Carthage tributary to Rome,—retired to the cultivation of his garden.

Far from considering themselves degraded by these rustic labours, the senators were almost constantly occupied in them; and the custom of residing on their estates was so general, that there was a regular establishment of couriers,<sup>1</sup> whose duty it was to summon them when any extraordinary business required their attendance in the senate. This general attention to husbandry was then, indeed, as much the effect of necessity as choice: for the lands of the commonwealth having been divided in equal and very minute portions, among all its subjects, each was obliged to labour for his own subsistence; and a long time elapsed ere the introduction of commerce, and the consequent acquisition of wealth, enabled individuals to purchase the estates of their fellow-citizens, and to obtain a revenue from the rent of land, rather than from its cultivation.

Thus in the early, and the happiest, period of the republic, the Romans were all, except the lowest artisans, at once agriculturists and soldiers; and though for the most part residing always in the country, yet being all denizens

<sup>1</sup> "Couriers." These were called *Viatores*, from their attendance on the senators requiring them to be almost constantly travelling. *Cicero de Senect.* 16,

of Rome, they were considered as citizens, and were addressed under the common appellation of *Quirites*.<sup>2</sup>

The greater number only visited the city on every ninth day: they went there to provide themselves with those necessaries which were not to be procured in the country; to interchange commodities; and to examine the new laws which the magistrates caused to be posted on the Capitol, and in the market-place, during three such days consecutively, before they were presented to the general assembly of the people for confirmation.

It was on these *market-days*<sup>3</sup> that the tribunes used to harangue the people on the affairs of government; and it was those harangues which fomented the misunderstanding between the patrician and plebeian orders during the whole period of the republic. But notwithstanding the seditions which they excited, more than three centuries elapsed after the deposition of

<sup>2</sup> "*Quirites*." From Quirinus, the name given to Romulus after he was ranked among the gods.

<sup>3</sup> These "*market-days*" were called *Nundinæ*, from their occurring on the ninth day; and the full term of "three such days" *Trinundinum*. *Tit. Liv.* l. iii. c. 35. *Dionys.* l. ii. c. 28. et. vii. 58.

the kings, before they occasioned blood to be spilled in Rome. Love of their country, and the conviction that the interests of both orders, however apparently separate, were really united, and that the ruin of the one would entail destruction on the other, produced this happy effect; and the horrors of civil warfare were reserved for those times when riches and luxury had corrupted their morals, when the probity and the simplicity by which they had been distinguished were effaced, and their pristine attachment to their rustic homes and labours was superseded by new desires. Then, indeed, Roman armies, which had heretofore warred only upon strangers, were seen to contend against each other with more than the fury of foreign enemies, and Rome was deluged with the blood of her own citizens.\*

This change was the natural consequence of their aggrandizement. When, after the second Punic war, they had extended their conquests into Greece, Asia, and Syria, and when at length they had destroyed Carthage, then it was that, forgetting their ancient manners, they adopted those of the nations they had subdued, and became slaves to the vices of the very men who had submitted to their arms.

\* *Tit. Liv. l. vii. c. 40.*

Invincible in toil, in danger, and in adversity, they yielded to the sweets of repose and prosperity: from a people accustomed only to war, and the labours of the field, they became a nation enervated by voluptuousness; and unmindful of their former glory, and the means by which they had acquired it, they gave way to all the allurements of pleasure. "There reigned over every action of life,"—says a celebrated historian,—“a refinement of sensuality which anticipated each natural want: heat and cold were divested of all their inconvenience; hunger and thirst were rather courted than satisfied; and sleep came, not so much the balm restorer of exhausted nature, as the precursor of new pleasures.”<sup>5</sup> In a moment, as it were, the face of every thing at Rome was changed: professors appeared in arts which were before unknown; the magnificence of their buildings, the variety and splendor of their

<sup>5</sup> *Sallust. Bell. Cat. c. 13.* In another part, Sallust thus describes the manners of the ancient times: “Morality reigned equally in the camp and in the city; and the empire of justice and virtue was less the effect of laws, than of natural principles: they used no other means to sustain themselves and the republic, than valour in war, and in peace, equity and moderation. *Bell. Cat. c. 9.*

furniture, the costliness and elegance of their dress, and the delicacy of their tables, became a study as inviting as it was new, and was pursued with an ardor which exceeded all bounds.

They then began to resign the toils of the farm, and the cares of the household, to their menials, and reserved to themselves those employments alone which were either agreeable, or considered honorable. Hence arose that vast multitude of slaves, who were counted by thousands, and distinguished by nations. Forced during the day to cultivate the earth, loaded with fetters, and under the inspection of superintendents not the less rigid that they were not themselves free,<sup>6</sup> and fed only on bread and water, the farm-slaves were shut up at night in subterraneous dungeons, into which light and air were only admitted through an aperture in the roof.<sup>7</sup> Those employed in the household duties were treated with more indulgence, and appear to have filled the various domestic offices

<sup>6</sup> It is a common remark in the West Indies, that negroes, when entrusted with authority over their fellow-slaves, are more severe than free persons.

<sup>7</sup> "*Farm-slaves.*" For minute particulars of their treatment, see *Flor.* l. iii. c. 19; *Lucan.* l. vii. 402; *Columell.* l. i. c. 7; *Plin.* l. xviii. c. 3; et ib. c. 6.

of modern times, together with some that have fallen into disuse.\* But in whatever department they were placed, they were the absolute property of their masters; and the laws regarding them were enacted in a spirit of severity, which, however it may be palliated on grounds of policy, is not calculated to inspire an exalted idea of Roman humanity. This, however, applies more particularly to the ruder ages of the republic; and it must be admitted that, at a later period, their situation was much ameliorated.

Some feeble attempts were made to repress the progress of luxury, and many sumptuary laws were passed. Among these the *Oppian Law*,—enacted in the year of Rome 537, during the war with Hannibal,—prohibited ladies from wearing clothes of various colours, or more than half an ounce of gold in ornaments; and forbade them the use of carriages in the city, or within

\* “*Domestic Slaves.*” There were the *Atriensis*, *Pedissequus*, *Agaso*, *Lecticarii*, *Coquus*, *Cellarius*, *Cubicularius*, and *Dispensator*; the house-porter, footman, groom, chairmen, cook, butler, valet, and house-steward: they had besides, the *Tonsor*, *Unguentarius*, *Balneator*, *Unctor*, *Chironomontes*, *Pocillator*, &c.; the barber (which office was sometimes filled by a female), perfumer, bather, rubber and anointer, carver, cup-bearer, &c.

the distance of a thousand paces around it, except on occasion of public solemnities. But this, with other restraints that had been imposed on the growing licentiousness of the times, was repealed about twenty years afterwards, when the battle of Zuma had dissipated the fears to which they owed their enactment; notwithstanding the opposition of Cato the Censor, who forcibly represented to the senate the fatal consequences which foreign innovations on their ancient customs might entail on the republic.\*

Nor were the fears of Cato imaginary: all that he had predicted failed not to occur: luxury, which entered Rome, as if in triumph, together with the spoils of the conquered nations, stifled that love of virtue and of toil in which the honor of the Roman name and the

\* Cato thus expressed himself when opposing the repeal of the Oppian law :—"Conscript Fathers, the republic is attacked by two opposite evils—avarice and luxury. The state becomes daily more flourishing; already have our arms been carried into Greece and Asia, countries abounding with all that can arouse and stimulate the passions; and the spoils of kingdoms are ours: but it is this very opulence that alarms me, and I scarce know most to dread, that they should despoil us, or we them." *Tib. Liv. l. xxv. c. 4.*

strength of the republic had consisted. The domestic duties of well-ordered life gave way to irregularity and indolence, and the love of pleasure bore down every rule of moral conduct; poverty was considered as disgrace, and opulence became the only road to power and to fame; moderation and public spirit were supplanted by avarice and ambition; and patriotism made but a feeble stand against the overwhelming tide of corruption which engulfed every honorable sentiment and generous feeling in its vortex. Statesmen, whose unambitious prudence had been the admiration of the universe, entered into competition for power, and for place,—not unfrequently supporting their pretensions by open violence; and when exhausted by excess of prodigality, they accepted of the government of distant provinces only to plunder them. Immense sums were thus drawn from abroad to support their interest at Rome; and they pillaged the allies, and even the subjects of the republic, the more easily to corrupt and enslave their fellow-citizens.

In vain did the oppressed people seek redress at Rome: the decision of suits depended on a multitude of judges, who—themselves frequently implicated in similar crimes—prostituted their

decision to favor, or to bribery, and arrested the course of justice. The laws, indeed, gave the people the right to compel restitution; but they were enforced only against petty depredators, and yielded, in important cases, to power and corruption.<sup>10</sup>

The senate, which had formerly been the refuge of the unfortunate, and the asylum of the oppressed; and the magistrates and generals, whose glory was wont to consist in defending the provinces, and sustaining the allies with inviolable justice and fidelity; from being their protectors, became their tyrants.

This corruption, which had its source among the rich and great, did not fail to infect the mass of the people. The simplicity of manners which had distinguished the citizen, fled; and those hours which were formerly dedicated to some useful occupation, were now devoted to pleasure, and divided among the ceremonious duties of

<sup>10</sup> The first law against extortion was passed in the third Punic war, about the year 604 of the city: it was called the *Calpurnian law*, from having been passed through the influence of L. Calpurnius Piso Frugi, tribune of the people; and was followed by various others, severally known as the *Cacilian*, *Servilian*, *Attilian*, *Cornelian*, and *Julian* laws. *Cic. de Offic.* l. ii. c. 21, *sub fin.*

civilized society, and the indulgence of the passions. Thus their habits of life became gradually more refined, and more profligate; what they gained in polish they lost in worth; and at length, under the emperors,<sup>11</sup> the extinction of liberty, by destroying that self-respect which freedom inspires, put the final seal to their depravity.

<sup>11</sup> “*Under the Emperors.*” The usurpation of Augustus, from which period the reign of the emperors is dated, took place in the 723d year of Rome—according to the generally received chronology—and thirty years before the birth of CHRIST.

## CHAP. II.

Classification of the Roman Citizens.—Tribes.—Curiz.—Patrician, Equestrian, and Plebeian Orders.—Slaves.—Freedmen.—Senators and Senate.—Consuls.—Prætors.—Censors.—Tribunes of the People.—Curule-Magistracy.—Lictors.

THE citizens of Rome were anciently divided into three *Tribes*, and each tribe into ten *Curiz*; but the number of tribes was afterwards augmented to thirty-five, and they were separately classed, in order to distinguish between the actual residents in the city, and those subjects of the commonwealth, who, although possessing the right of citizenship, lived wholly out of town. Each tribe furnished 1000 foot, and 100 horse, for the army; and the collective force of 3000 infantry and 300 cavalry was termed a *Legion*: this quota was afterwards very considerably augmented. The original tribes were severally distinguished by the names of *Ramnenses*, *Tatienses*, and *Luceres*; those subsequently added were all styled *Posteriores*.

The people were originally separated into

two ranks—the patrician and plebeian :—in after times the order of *Equites*, or knights, was added ; and the subjugation of foreign countries, combined with motives of internal policy, introduced slavery : the population was therefore composed of four classes—*Patricians*, *Knights*, *Plebeians*, and *Slaves*.

The *Patrician*, as the first order in the state, consisted of the most eminent citizens ; and those families were deemed patrician, whose ancestors had been members of the senate in the earliest period of the regal, or consular government. Those among them who had filled any superior office were considered noble, and possessed the right of making images of themselves, which were transmitted to their descendants, and formed part of their domestic worship. This right, in the Roman law termed *Jus Imaginis*, may be compared to that of our armorial bearings ; only that, among the Romans, it was a distinction confined to rank, and could not be assumed by those who were not regularly entitled to it. Persons not belonging to this order, but who had been admitted to the curule-magistracy, acquired the right of having images of themselves ; but were, nevertheless, termed *novi homines*, or upstarts ; while those who did not possess it were deemed ignoble.

The *Equestrian order* arose out of an institution of Romulus, who selected one hundred young men from each of the tribes, to serve on horseback, as his personal guard. They were, at that period, divided into three *Centuries*, each distinguished by the name of its respective tribe; but the number was increased by successive kings, and in process of time became unlimited: and although they continued to be subject to military service, they ceased to be exclusively devoted to it, and were employed in various civil departments of the state, but especially in the collection of the revenue.

It has not been clearly ascertained at what period the equites became a distinct order, but it seems probable that they were so considered before the expulsion of the kings. They were at first supported at the public expense, and a tax was imposed on widows for the maintenance of their horses; but when they no longer formed a separate military corps, their services were not thus recompensed, and they merely received from the public a horse and a gold ring. They were chosen, indiscriminately, from the patrician and plebeian orders; and, indeed, towards the close of the Republic, every Roman citizen possessed of a fortune of 400 *sestertia*,

or about 3230*l. sterling*, was entitled to be enrolled among the knights.<sup>1</sup> The order, therefore, did not resemble that of modern knight-hood; and became, in fact, finally, nothing more than a distinction arising from the amount of property, and constituting a middle rank in the state, somewhat analogous to our English gentry.

The *Plebeian order* was composed of the lowest class of freemen. Those who resided in the country were styled *Plebs rustica*; those who lived in the city, *Plebs urbana*: but the distinction did not consist in the name alone, and the former were considered as the most respectable. The *plebs urbana* consisted not only of the poorer mechanics and labourers, but of a multitude of idlers, who lived on the public bounty,<sup>2</sup> and whose turbulence was a constant

<sup>1</sup> *Tit. Liv.* l. i. c. 30, 35, et 43; l. ii. c. 1; et l. v. c. 7: *Plin. Epist.* l. i. ep. 19.

<sup>2</sup> “*Public Bounty.*” This consisted in a donation of corn, which was distributed monthly to necessitous citizens: the quantity is not certain: some authors have asserted that it amounted to five bushels per man, but it more probably was only five pecks, which was the allowance usually made to slaves; and this supposition gains strength from the contempt with which not only its acceptance, but its value, are mentioned by the classic

source of disquietude to the government. They were under the guidance of leaders of their own class, who were in the pay of factious men of rank, and they appear to have borne a strong resemblance to that portion of the present population of Naples termed Lazzaroni. The exercise of the mechanical arts being looked upon, at Rome, as servile employments beneath the dignity of freemen, there was but little scope for industry: nurtured, therefore, in idleness and beggary, they were needy and unprincipled; while the constant exhibition of public spectacles, and the combats of gladiators, gave them habits of licentiousness not unmixed with ferocity. Thus, the absence of moral restraint, combined with a sense of their own importance as members of the commonwealth, rendered them willing assistants in the most audacious conspiracies against the government; and their unbridled licence has been justly considered as one of the leading

authors. It was delivered to the bearers of transferable tickets, in allusion to which Juvenal says:—

“A vile corn-ticket be his fate at last.”

Sat. vii.

And Persius:—

“Each Publius, with his tally, may obtain  
A casual dole of coarse and damaged grain.”

*Gifford, sat. v.*

causes of the overthrow of the republic, and the extinction of liberty. But this only applies to the lowest class of the plebeians; many of the most estimable citizens were to be found in that order; and several rose from it to the chief offices, and the first dignities of the state.

*Slaves* were not entitled to any of the privileges of freemen; and, although forming a large portion of the community, they were not considered as citizens. They, in fact, possessed no political rights; were, by law, rendered incapable of acquiring property, or of giving evidence in a court of justice; and were viewed in no other light than as part of the chattel possessions of their masters.

Persons were reduced to that unfortunate condition either through the chances of war, or the commission of crime; by sale; from bankruptcy; or in consequence of being born in a state of servitude. Those enemies who surrendered voluntarily retained their freedom; but those taken in arms belonged to the captors, and were usually sold on the field of battle. Free citizens could not legally dispose of themselves as slaves; but fathers were allowed to sell their children; insolvent debtors were given up to their creditors until their debts were satisfied;

various offences were punishable by slavery; and the children of female slaves became the property of their masters, notwithstanding the father being a freeman.

There was a constant market for slaves at Rome, and regular dealers in the trade of selling them. They were usually exposed to sale in a state of nudity, with a label on the neck descriptive of their qualities, and seem to have been transferred in much the same manner as cattle.

Prisoners of war were disposed of by public auction, which was notified by a spear being set up at the place of sale. We have no certain account of the usual price of slaves; and as their value must have depended on their personal qualifications, particular instances cannot be assumed as data on which to found an opinion. We are told, that captives were sold in the camp of the celebrated Lucullus, towards the close of the republic, for less than three shillings of our money; and Gibbon alludes to that fact as a proof of the little estimation in which they were held: but it is obvious, that it must have arisen from circumstances, independent of their general worth, and we know that slaves, who had been in-

structed in the arts, were often sold for large sums.<sup>3</sup>

Masters possessed absolute power over their slaves: they might not only scourge, but even put them to death, at pleasure; and this right was actually exercised with such cruelty, that it became necessary to pass various laws to restrain it. Still, however, the legislature looked upon them with a jealous eye; and the enactments respecting them indicate great mistrust, as well as harshness. One of these provided, that, if the master of a family was slain at his own house, and the murderers were not discovered, all his domestic slaves were liable to be put to death; and Tacitus records an instance of four hundred having suffered in consequence, in one family: other statutes breathed a similar spirit, and the torture was established by law.<sup>4</sup> When slaves were punished capitally, they were usually crucified, until the reign of the Emperor Constantine the Great, when this mode of execution was abolished.

Notwithstanding the rigor of the laws with regard to slaves, and the general severity

<sup>3</sup> See Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, vol. i. c. 2, and notes *passim*.

<sup>4</sup> *Tacit. Ann.* l. xiv. c 43. *Plin. Epist.* l. viii. ep. 14.

of their treatment, instances were not wanting in which the hardship of their lot was mitigated by the kindness of their masters; and it must be admitted, that many opportunities for emancipating themselves were afforded to those among them who were prudent and industrious. The law, it is true, declared them incapable of acquiring property in their own right; and, consequently, of making a will: all they might possess belonged to their master: but this was not always enforced; and, on the contrary, it became customary to give them a certain allowance, either in money or in grain, for their maintenance, out of which they frequently saved sufficient to purchase their freedom. They were even permitted to possess slaves themselves; and Cicero tells us, that those who were sober, and well-conducted, seldom remained many years in bondage.<sup>5</sup> The preja-

<sup>5</sup> *Cicero, Phil. viii. 2.* An instance of the indulgence of allowing slaves to dispose of their property by will is recorded by the younger Pliny. Speaking of the recent death of some of his slaves, he says:—"I have allowed them to make a kind of will, which I observe as religiously as if they were entitled to that privilege. I receive and obey their requests, as so many absolute commands, suffering them to dispose of their effects to

dice entertained by the free citizens against handicraft trades was greatly in favor of the slaves, as it tended to throw those branches of industry into their hands, and gave them advantages of which they knew so well how to avail themselves, that many of them, when liberated, amassed considerable wealth. Some, who displayed early talents, received an education which fitted them for literary employments, in which they seldom failed to obtain their freedom; and many were gratuitously emancipated as a reward for their services. The farm-slaves, however, but seldom participated in these favors: the nature of their employment deprived them of the opportunities, enjoyed by those engaged in the more domestic duties, for rendering such services to their masters as would be most likely to excite their benevolence; and their vast number was an insurmountable impediment: some rich individuals are said to have possessed many thousands, and the legislature did not permit the emancipation of more than one hundred by one master.

whom they please; with this single restriction, that they leave them to some of the family; which, to persons in their station, is to be considered as a sort of commonwealth." *Melmoth's Pliny*, b. viii. ep. 16.

When slaves were manumitted, their heads were shaved, and they received a cap, as a badge of liberty, of which it has since become the emblem. They were also presented by their master with a white robe, and an iron ring, and then assumed his name, which they prefixed to their own, and were ever after called his freedmen.<sup>6</sup> Nor did the connexion between them and their former master entirely cease: they remained in a certain state of dependance on him, and, though no longer his slaves, became his clients: were he reduced to poverty, they were bound to contribute to his support; if they died intestate, he succeeded to their pro-

<sup>6</sup> A custom was observed on the manumission of slaves precisely similar to one of the *ceremonies* of the game of *blindman's-buff*!—The master, or lictor, turning him round in a circle, and giving him a blow on the cheek, let him go, signifying that he was thenceforward free:—

“ See there that Dama ! view a worthless slave,  
Of knavish muleteers the veriest knave !  
Let but his master one small turn bestow,  
Plain Dama, straight, shall Marcus Dama grow.”

*Owen's Persius, sat. v.*

The coincidence, coupled with the analogy between the condition of the slave, and the supposed one of the person bound in the game, would lead us to conclude that this “ sport of our youth ” is entitled to the dignity of a Roman origin.

party; and any flagrant act of ingratitude to him was punished, as it merited, by their being degraded to their former condition.<sup>7</sup>

The senate was the great council of the empire. The senators were originally chosen from among the patricians, and their number was then confined to one hundred; but it was afterwards gradually extended to a thousand, and the knights and plebeians were indiscriminately admitted. They were at first called *Patres*, as a title of the highest veneration and respect; and their offspring *Patricii*; whence the term *Patrician*: those who were added to the original number were styled *Conscripti*, signifying that they were enrolled together with the *Patres*, and thence the title of "*Conscript Fathers*," by which it became usual to address them collectively. In the time of the later emperors, they individually acquired the distinction of "most illustrious." Augustus finally limited their number to six hundred.

<sup>7</sup> By a law passed in the year of the city 761, if a freedman died worth 100,000 sesterces, or about 8000 sterling, leaving only one child, his former master became entitled to one half; if he left two, to one third; but if more, he was excluded. This was altered by Justinian. *Instit. l. iii. tit. 8.*

The senators were anciently nominated by the kings, and, after their expulsion, by the consuls and military tribunes; but from the year of Rome 310, this great power became the privilege of the censors. Although persons of the plebeian order were eligible to the senate, yet no one could obtain that dignity who had been engaged in a mean occupation, or whose father had been a slave; and, in the reign of Augustus, a fortune equal to about 10,000*l. sterling* was a necessary qualification. The senators were not all chosen by election: certain offices in the magistracy, and some military services, gave a title to admission; and the dignity was also conferred on some honorary members, who seem to have paid a sum of money to the public treasury on taking their seat; but to what amount is uncertain; nor does it clearly appear whether as the price of the privilege, or merely as a fee on admission; but it probably was only a fee, as the younger Pliny distinctly mentions it as having been paid under that head, and in amount not exceeding 60*l.* in some of the provincial senates.\* It is supposed, and with every appearance of cor-

\* *Plin. Epist.* l. x. ep. 113.

rectness, that candidates were not eligible until they had attained their thirtieth year; but this is merely inferred from other analogous regulations, as history contains no positive information on the subject. The members could not be compelled to attend after sixty years of age.<sup>9</sup>

The senate was reviewed by the censors every *Lustrum*, or fifth year; and if any member had rendered himself unworthy of that high rank by his conduct, or had sunk his fortune below the sum required by law, his name was omitted in reading the roll, and he was thus excluded. But if mere want of property occasioned his exclusion, he might regain his seat on the re-establishment of his affairs: and an appointment to certain offices in the state, might restore him, even when the cause of expulsion was more serious. A remarkable instance in point occurred in the person of the celebrated historian Sallust, who was expelled the senate for being engaged in an intrigue with a married lady, but recovered his senatorial rank on being made prætor. He was afterwards appointed governor of Numidia, where his conduct was

<sup>9</sup> *Plin. Epist.* l. iv. ep. 23.

were styled *Prætors*.—Their duty consisted in superintending the administration of justice; and they were, in fact, the chief judges in all causes that did not fall under the immediate cognizance of the assemblies of the people, or of the senate. Their number varied at different periods; but for a long time consisted of six; two for the city, and four for the provinces. The office, like every other under the republic, was elective; but notwithstanding that its duties demanded an intimate acquaintance with the laws, it does not appear that a reputation for extraordinary legal knowledge, or even any previous practice in the courts, were deemed indispensable qualifications.

The *Censors* were at first appointed solely to keep a register of the number and fortunes of the people; to class them in their respective rank; and to inspect into their private conduct. We have already seen how far their power extended over the senate in the performance of the latter part of their duty; and it was equally unlimited over every individual of the community.

An enumeration of the whole population of Rome was made every fifth year, in a spacious enclosure, called the field of Mars, where the

people were passed in review, and gave an account of their fortune, families, and occupations. On this occasion it was that the censors exercised the extraordinary powers with which they were entrusted; not only animadverting on those who appeared to merit reproof, but, if their conduct deserved greater severity, depriving them, if knights, of their public horses, or, if persons in a private station, of their privileges as Roman citizens. A similar review took place, every lustrum, in every other part of the empire, under the inspection of provincial censors.

However inquisitorial, and inconsistent with the spirit of freedom, such a tribunal may appear, it must yet be acknowledged that, in a political point of view, it must have been of the most essential importance to the government, as affording a clear view of the resources of the state; while, morally considered, it must have operated as a powerful check on public depravity and private vice. But the dissolute manners of the times, under the emperors, could not long support so strict an investigation, and the office was gradually abolished: the last census of the Roman people was made in the year of the city 827; but the duties, and even the title, of censor, had then long ceased to exist. It was a situa-

tion of great power, as well as dignity; for, besides the vast influence which the uncontrolled exercise of such authority as that already mentioned must have in itself afforded, the censors had the management of the revenue; and, contrary to the usual custom, they remained five years in office.

Though not so high in point of rank as the preceding magistrates, those who possessed the largest share of influence, and real weight in the commonwealth, were the *Tribunes of the people*. They were appointed, soon after the establishment of the republic, to guard the plebeians against the oppression of the patricians; and were always elected from the plebeian order. Their power, indeed, would seem to have been merely preventive; for it was confined, by law, to the prohibition of such enactments as appeared to trench on the rights and liberties of the people, and their jurisdiction only extended over the city. But the defence of those rights afforded a plausible pretext, of which they were not slow in availing themselves, to control the imposition of taxes, the levying of troops, and, in short, every operation of the government. They were ten in number, their persons were sacred, and by the single word  *veto*  they could put a negative on any decree of the senate, and a stop to

the proceedings of all other magistrates. It was through their persevering exertions that their own order was admitted to a participation in public employments; but the influence which they at first employed to curb the power of the nobility they afterwards used for their own aggrandizement, and they often joined in the exercise of that very tyranny which it was their chief duty to oppose. While the republic subsisted, their power contributed to preserve the balance of the constitution; but its exercise was incompatible with a monarchical form of government; and, accordingly, when Augustus usurped the sovereignty, he was created tribune for life, and arrogated to himself all the real authority of the office; while to his colleagues, who continued, as formerly, to be annually elected, he left nothing but its rank, and minor duties.

The high, but casual, office of dictator, and those of the decemvirate and triumvirate, belong rather to the page of history than to this desultory composition; and an account of the various inferior offices of the state would extend it beyond the limits to which it is confined.

The *Censal-Magistracy*, to which allusion has been already made, was so termed from the seat which the chief magistrates occupied, on public

occasions, being called a *curule chair*. This was a stool, without a back, similar to our folding chair, and could be doubled together for the convenience of carriage: which was the more necessary as it accompanied the magistrate wherever he went. The seat was merely a piece of leather; but the frame was of carved ivory, or, at least, richly inlaid with it, and the feet were moulded at the extremities so as to resemble those of some animal.

The consuls, and all the chief magistrates, except the censors and the tribunes of the people, were preceded, in public, by a certain number, according to their rank, of officers of justice, called *Lictors*, each bearing on his shoulder, as the insignia of office, the *fascēs* and *securis*, which were a bundle of rods with an axe in the centre of one end. But the lictors in attendance on an inferior magistrate carried the *fascēs* only, without the axe, to denote that he was not possessed of the power of capital punishment.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> For minute particulars of the institution of the senate, its privileges, power, forms, and decrees, and respecting all the offices of the state,—see *Kennel's Antiquities*, and *Roman Antiquities* by Dr. Alexander Adam.

## CHAP. III.

**Patrons and their Clients.—The Bar.—Fees.—Courts.—Orations.—Audience.—Time of Pleading.—Tribunals.—Mode of Trial.—Centumviral Court.—Jurisprudence.—Laws of the Twelve Tables.—Justinian Code, Pandects, and Institutes.—Theodosian-Code.**

WITH a view to render the patrician and plebeian orders in some measure dependant on each other, and thus to cement their union for the common interest, it was decreed by Romulus, that each plebeian should choose a patrician for his *Patron*, of whom he was then said to be the *Client*. The duty of the patron consisted in protecting his clients from oppression, in pleading their causes before the tribunals, and generally, in promoting their welfare: that of the clients, in rendering him such services, both personal and pecuniary, as might be in their power; but chiefly in aiding him with their votes and interest when he became a candidate for any public employment. This connexion, once established, usually became hereditary; and being sanctioned by law, and strengthened by the attachment

arising from long habit, and a sense of mutual advantage, was very rarely dissolved:<sup>1</sup> it was indeed regarded in so sacred a light, that neither party was allowed to give evidence against the other; and whoever transgressed in this particular was considered to have forfeited the protection of the laws, and might be slain with impunity. This union continued undisturbed until the introduction of luxury changed in some degree its original principle: the distinction of ranks, and their relative duties, indeed, still remained; but the vast wealth and influence acquired by some of the patricians attached multitudes of interested clients to them, among whom many of their own order did not blush to enrol themselves; and what was formerly the cordial intercourse of reciprocal services, became that of sordid flattery and haughty superiority.

<sup>1</sup> "*Patrons.*" When the republic had attained extended empire, cities and whole provinces chose patrons at Rome, who attended to their interests in the senate, and whose services were requited with presents of great value. In the war against Antony, when all Italy had espoused the cause of Octavius, the city of Bologna alone demanded and obtained permission to remain neuter, in consequence of its having been under the protection of the family of Antony.

The bar was so distinguished as a profession, that many Romans of the highest rank acted as pleaders, and consecrated their talents to the gratuitous service of their fellow citizens. This custom was as old as the time of Romulus, who imposed the defence of his clients upon the patron, without allowing him to accept of any remuneration that could be considered as a fee. But this apparent liberality of the patrons was not altogether disinterested: it was, in fact, the instrument of their ambition; for employments in the state being conferred, during the republic, by general suffrage, the clients repaid with their votes the obligation they had incurred. This first received a check by the introduction of the ballot; and as votes could be no longer depended upon, it, in process of time, became customary for clients to make an annual present to their patron. The body of the people having thus become tributary to the senate, a law was passed, about the year 594 of the city, which prohibited senators from receiving any present whatever from their clients, and particularly, any kind of remuneration for acting as counsel in a court of justice.

At length, when the emperors deprived the people of the right of electing their own magis-

trates, the chief motive which actuated patrons in the gratuitous exertion of their abilities ceased; and their former clients being thus deprived of legal advice, the practice of the law necessarily became mercenary, and was thenceforward followed as a profession for profit. The mere lawyers, however, placed so high a value on their assistance, that it became necessary to fix bounds to their rapacity; and they were not allowed to accept of more than certain specified fees, under penalty of being considered guilty of extortion, which subjected them to a forfeiture of four times the amount. The maximum of these fees was at first fixed at 10,000 sesterces, about 80*l.* sterling. But this wholesome regulation was evaded: a swarm of venal petti-foggers,—the pests of society,—fomented law-suits for their private advantage, and carried their depredations on the public so far, that they attracted the notice of the senate; and in the reign of Trajan, a decree was passed obliging the parties in every cause to make oath, before it was tried, that they had neither given nor promised any gratification to their advocates; permitting them, however, to remunerate them after judgment was obtained. This edict was not intended to deprive the lawyers of the just fruits of their

labours, but was a necessary check on the mercenary cupidity of knaves, whose exactions brought disgrace on an otherwise honorable profession. It did not prevent barristers of eminence from accumulating very large fortunes: the younger Pliny mentions one *Regulus*, who, notwithstanding he lived in great splendor, and was not, it would seem, much indebted to the goodness of his character, realized a sum equivalent to *four hundred thousand pounds of our money*.<sup>2</sup> Nor, if the accusation of *Persius* be not unfounded, were they very delicate in the mode of acquisition:—

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“envy not the sordid gains,  
Which recompense the well-tongued lawyer's pains;  
Though Umbrian rusticks, for his sage advice,  
Pour in their jars of fish, and oil, and spice,  
So thick and fast, that, ere the first be o'er,  
A second and a third are at the door.”

*Gifford*, sat. iii.

The numerous retainers of the patrician pleaders,—some of whom continued, notwithstanding the general venality of the bar, to defend their clients without any other reward than the

<sup>2</sup> “*Regulus*.” Some curious anecdotes of this person are to be found in *Pliny's Letters*, B. i. ep. 5; ii. 20; and iv. 3.

consciousness of doing good, and the pleasure of rendering service—together with the curiosity of the idle, usually occasioned the courts to be thronged with auditors, who canvassed the decisions of the judges with great freedom. On occasions of public interest—as, when a magistrate was accused of malversation, of having trespassed upon the liberty of his fellow citizens, or of having abused his power,—the great square of the forum, where the halls of justice were situated, scarcely sufficed to contain the multitude. Each citizen, looking upon himself as a member of the same great family, was zealous in support of the common rights, scrutinized with jealous watchfulness into the conduct of their rulers, and looked with anxious solicitude to the issue of the cause: while, on the other hand, the friends and kindred of the accused, no less interested in procuring his acquittal, attended, in deep mourning, to second the efforts of his advocates by their solicitations in his behalf.

The harangues delivered on such occasions were prepared with the most studious care, and became the subject of compliment and congratulation to those who delivered them. Those which have been preserved are models of perspicuity, force, and elegance; and the evidence

of contemporary authors shows, that forensic eloquence was not confined to those with whose orations we are acquainted.

The auditory were accustomed to applaud any particularly striking passage; and young barristers, emulous of similar approbation, used to hire an audience for the purpose: but the fellows of whom it was composed, seldom comprehending where to bestow their commendations, and sometimes mistaking the concerted signal, were often loudest in their acclamations when they were least deserved; and Pliny shrewdly remarks, that the worst speakers were usually hailed with the warmest plaudits.<sup>3</sup>

Whether from excess of business in the courts; or of prolixity in the pleadings, the judges found it expedient to limit the speeches of counsel to a given time, which they fixed, at their pleasure, *before the cause was opened*. To us it must appear equally presumptuous and unjust to set bounds to the examination of a question ere its full extent had been ascertained, and even in Rome the custom was censured; yet such was the invariable practice; and as the indulgence of the court extended the time whenever

<sup>3</sup> *Plin. Epist. l. ii. ep. 14.*

it was particularly required, it does not appear to have occasioned any flagrant injustice.

There were various tribunals for the trial of civil and criminal actions, and a court of equity for the decision of causes that were not restricted by any fixed law. Trial by jury, as established with us, was not known; but the mode of judging in criminal cases seems to have nearly approached it. A certain number of senators and knights, or other citizens of high consideration, were annually chosen by the prætor to act as his assessors; and of these, some, but how many does not appear, were appointed to sit in judgment along with him. They decided by a majority of voices, and returned their verdict either *guilty, not guilty, or uncertain*; in which latter instance the cause was deferred: but if the votes for acquittal and condemnation were equal, the culprit was discharged; or, according to some authors, his fate was then decided by the prætor. There were also judges, called *Centumviri*, to the number, at first, of 100, and afterwards of 180, who were chosen equally from the thirty-five tribes; and from among these the parties mutually, or, if they could not agree, the prætor, chose one, or more, to whom the cause was re-

ferred. In cases of great importance, one fourth, and sometimes the whole body of the centumviral court sat in judgment, presided by the prætor. But no Roman citizen could be capitally punished except with the consent of the general assembly of the people: and corruption in a judge was punishable with death.<sup>4</sup>

Both the cursory nature, and the object of this brief essay, seem to preclude the extensive subject of jurisprudence; yet, having taken this summary notice of the bar, an equally concise account of the rise and progress of the Roman law may be expected, and cannot prove wholly uninteresting.

The ancient laws were generally the result of momentary emergency, and were in most cases inapplicable to future circumstances. Those of Romulus, and the other early legislators, were rather intended to restrain the violence of men in a semi-barbarous state, than to regulate the clashing interests, and control the passions, of

<sup>4</sup> The "*Centumviral Court*" was one of the highest judicature; but in later times their jurisdiction appears to have been confined to cases of wills and inheritances. The centumviri only remained in office twelve months.

The capital punishment to which the laws of the twelve tables subjected corrupt judges, was afterwards commuted into a fine.

a civilized people. Those of the subsequent kings, had chiefly for their object the maintenance of monarchical authority, and were ill calculated to the republican form of government which followed; yet, the patricians contrived to retain those which favoured their own order, and their influence procured the enactment of others which promised to secure to them the possession of arbitrary power. But the unanimous voice of the people called for some fixed and more appropriate code; and in the year of Rome 299, ambassadors were sent to Greece to collect the laws of that wise and polished people. At their return, these were embodied with some of those previously in force among the Romans themselves, and engraved on twelve tablets of brass, whence they were called "the *laws of the twelve tables*."<sup>5</sup> However, in the lapse of successive ages such a variety of new statutes were added, that they became intricate and obscure; and, though some ineffectual efforts were made to reform them, it was not until the reign of the emperor Justinian, in the early part of the sixth century of the Christian æra, that they were class-

<sup>5</sup> The "*Twelve Tables*" were preserved in the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus. Nothing now remains but some scattered fragments of the laws engraved on them, which have been collected from various authors.

ed, and reduced into a form which obtained the name of the *Justinian Code*: but this being found defective, it was revised, and republished about six years afterwards. A digest of these laws was comprised in fifty books, termed *Pandects*; and the elements of Roman law were at the same time composed and published under the title of *Institutes*.

A similar attempt had been previously made by the Emperor Theodosius, but the collection of laws published under his authority, and known as the *Theodosian Code*, contained only the imperial constitutions for little more than the previous century.

The Roman code appears to have been founded on a comprehensive view of the laws of nature adapted to a state of civilized society, and applicable alike to all times and governments: hence it survived the barbarism of the middle ages, and became the universal law of Europe; and though it has been superseded in many instances by municipal regulations, and in our own country by what is termed the common law, it yet serves as the basis of the great structure of the law of nations, and is still acknowledged in our courts of civil judicature.

## CHAP IV.

State of Rome until the Time of Nero.—Subsequent Improvements.—Nero's Palace.—Town Houses.—Household Gods.—The Capitol.—The Forum.—Pillars of Trajan and Antoninus.—Police and Population of the City.—Hospitals.—Medical Practice.—Orphans.—Money.—Private Wealth.

THE information which has been collected respecting the interior arrangement and general appearance of the houses in Rome, is extremely scanty and unsatisfactory; and even the recent excavations at *Herculaneum* and *Pompeii* have added but little to what was previously known on the subject.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> “*Herculaneum*” was accidentally discovered in 1689, by a peasant, on digging a well, at the depth of 70 feet from the surface of the earth. In consequence of the great expense attending the removal of the vast superincumbent mass, but little of the town has been explored, and the researches have been discontinued for some time past.

“*Pompeii*” was discovered at only a few feet below the surface; and the consequent facility of exploring its ruins, has enabled the workmen to lay open several of the

The city is supposed to have been little else than a confused assemblage of thatched cot-

streets. A distinguished traveller, the Rev. Mr. Eustace, thus describes its appearance within these few years. "The street which runs from the neighbourhood of the soldiers' quarters (at the entrance of the town) is only about 13 feet wide, formed like the Via Appia at Itri, and other places where it remains entire, of large stones fitted to each other in their original form, without being cut or broken for the purpose. There are on each side parapets raised about two feet above the middle, and about three feet wide. The pavement is furrowed by two deep ruts, which shows, evidently, that the carriages always kept the same line, and that the wheels were about 4 feet asunder: of course they must have all moved in the same direction, and had regular hours for coming and going, as there is not room for two; and even if there were, the stone posts, which are placed at intervals, would oblige them to return to the track."

"The houses on either side stand close to each other, seem to have been shops of different kinds, were of the same elevation, and nearly the same size. In one of these buildings were found several unfinished statues, that announce the workshop of a statuary. In another, the word *salve*, engraved in large characters on the threshold in mosaic, indicate, it may be supposed, the readiness of a publican to receive his guests. In one the amphoræ which contained wine still remains; and on the marble slab that served as a shop-board, are the marks of cups and glasses. The gate has one large central and two less

ages, previous to its destruction by the Gauls, in the 364th year after its foundation; yet some

openings on the sides, with parapets of the same breadth as the street; without, but close to it, are semicircular recesses with stone seats; and beyond a tomb, and a *palmarium*, or a receptacle for cinerary urns."

"The houses are on a small scale, generally of one, sometimes of two stories: the principal apartments are always behind, encircling a court with a portico round it, and a marble cistern in the middle; two had glass windows, (*see note 2, p. 55*); in the others, shutters only were used; the pavements are all mosaic, and the walls are stained with mild colours; the decorations are basso relievos in stucco, and paintings in medallions. Marble seems to have been common. On the whole, Pompeii, in all the circumstances I have mentioned, bears a strong resemblance to modern Italian towns; with this only difference, that in point of general appearance, the latter have, I think, the advantage. It must, however, be remembered, that Pompeii had already been damaged by an earthquake, and that the roofs and upper parts of the houses have been borne down by the weight of ashes showered upon them; and, in short, that, as not more than a quarter of the town has been hitherto explored, buildings of greater magnificence may yet be discovered."

In fact, subsequent researches have brought to light some elegant buildings, among which two tombs, one supposed to have belonged to some noble family, and the other to have been a public manufactory for gladiators who fell in combat, are conspicuous. Some interesting details

of the public buildings are said to have displayed much simple grandeur even at that early period, and one of the greatest works of

of the bas-reliefs on the latter, are to be found in a work, entitled "*Description des Tombeaux qui ont été découverts à Pompeii,*" par A. L. Millin.

The soldiers' quarters, to which Mr. Eustace alludes, are in the form of a rectangle, supported by colonnades of the Doric order. Rings and bolts are still visible in some small apartments behind, supposed to have been prisons; and in one of them was found a skeleton in chains.

Two theatres, a temple to Isis, and the walls of the town, have been discovered: the latter are about 20 feet in height, by 12 in breadth, and fortified by square towers.

Various domestic utensils, and some beautiful statuary, have at different times been found; but above all, a large quantity of manuscripts, from which much interesting information may be expected; but the process of unfolding them is so unavoidably slow, that a long period must elapse ere their contents can be ascertained.

Herculaneum and Pompeii are both in the vicinity of Naples. The earthquake mentioned by Mr. Eustace, happened in the year of our Lord 63; and the eruption of Mount Vesuvius—the final catastrophe which destroyed them—in August 79. On this occasion also perished Pliny the naturalist: the particulars of whose death, and of many circumstances attending the eruption, are detailed by his nephew, Pliny the younger, in his letters: book iv. ep. 16.

antiquity, its sewers, still attests the solidity at least of their construction. After that event, it was rebuilt in a more substantial manner, yet still with no great attention to regularity in the distribution, or symmetry in the structure of the houses, which were chiefly of wood, inconveniently lofty, and crowded together in narrow streets; and although the Grecian style of architecture, upon which that of the Romans was afterwards modelled, had been introduced about two centuries previous to the dissolution of the republic, it was not until the reign of Augustus that it was embellished with any very splendid edifices.

The memorable conflagration, in the time of Nero, reduced two thirds of the city to ashes. The catastrophe has been attributed, with much appearance of probability, to that odious tyrant himself; and though nothing can be said to palliate an act of such wanton atrocity, it must yet be admitted, that he did all in his power to repair the mischief he had created; and, that Rome owed her subsequent splendor to that calamity. The town was afterwards erected on a more extended and regular plan; the streets were widened; the height of the houses was limited to 70 feet; and regulations were made

which ensured a certain degree of elegance in their construction. From this period, indeed, may be dated that taste for decoration, and vastness of design, in both private and public buildings, which has continued to excite the wonder and admiration of succeeding ages.

Nero himself led the way to these improvements by rebuilding a great portion of what had been destroyed; and by the erection of a palace of such extraordinary extent and magnificence, that were not the descriptions of it which have been transmitted to us too well authenticated to admit of doubt, they would be received rather as the fictions of an eastern tale than as the records of a fact. The enclosure extended from the Palatine to the Esquiline Mount, which was more than a mile in breadth, and it was entirely surrounded with a spacious portico, embellished with a profusion of sculpture and statuary, among which stood a colossal statue of Nero himself, 120 feet in height. The gardens contained every variety of hill and dale, wood and water, interspersed with temples and pleasure houses; and the baths were supplied from a great distance with sea and mineral waters. The apartments were lined with marble, en-

riched with jasper, topaz, and other precious gems ; the timber works and ceilings were inlaid with gold, ivory, and mother-of-pearl ; and the resplendent elegance of its furniture and decorations, procured it the appellation of the *Golden-House*. But it was not destined to remain a monument of either the grandeur or the folly of its founder : it was destroyed by Vespasian, as being too gorgeous for the residence even of a Roman emperor.

After this epoch, the *Town-Houses* of persons of moderate fortune appear to have been enclosed within a court, called the vestibule, which was ornamented towards the street with a portico extending along the entire front. The entrance was by a flight of steps, through a folding gate of carved wood, or not unfrequently of brass, which led to the *Atrium*, or hall : this was a spacious oblong square, surrounded by galleries supported on pillars, and seems to have been the common sitting-room of the family. In ancient times, it was, indeed, the only public apartment for all domestic purposes ; and it was there that the occupations of spinning and weaving, which formed so material a part of the accomplishments of a Roman matron, were carried on by the female slaves under

her inspection. But, at a later period, it was solely appropriated, by families of the middle order, to the more refined uses of society, and was divided into different apartments by means of ample curtains; while in those of higher rank, it served merely as an anti-chamber to suites of spacious reception rooms. There were other apartments for supper, and for general accommodation; and separate bed-rooms for night, and for the repose in which the Romans were accustomed to indulge in the middle of the day.

The atrium contained a hearth, on which a fire was kept constantly burning, and around which were ranged the *Lares*, or images of the ancestors of the family. These were nothing more than waxen busts, and, though held in great respect, were not treated with the same veneration as the *Penates*, or household gods, which were considered of divine origin, and were never exposed to the view of strangers, but were kept in an inner apartment, called the *Penetralia*, where they were worshipped according to the peculiar rites of the family of whose adoration they were the objects. The lares, however, participated in the homage paid

to the penates, and the ceremonies appropriated to both constituted what was termed the domestic worship.

The Romans were ignorant of the use of chimneys, and were, consequently, not a little annoyed by smoke, in those houses in which the atrium was occupied by the family. Various expedients were resorted to in order to diminish the nuisance; one of which was, to anoint the wood, of which their fuel was composed, with the lees of oil. The mildness of the climate precluded the general use of fires in the private apartments; and when artificial warmth was required, it was afforded by means of a portable furnace, which, probably, was merely a deep brass pan, containing live embers; a custom which prevails at the present day in many parts of the southern continent of Europe. In great houses, a mode was afterwards introduced of heating the rooms by flues from a stove placed below them.

The windows were closed with blinds of linen, or plates of horn, but more generally merely with shutters of wood: during the time of the emperors, a species of transparent stone, or talc, was used for that purpose; but this was

an elegance appropriated exclusively to the mansions of the most distinguished citizens. Glass, though not unknown to the Romans, was not employed to admit light to their apartments until towards the fifth century of the Christian æra.\* The houses were built with high sloping roofs, covered with broad tiles, and there was usually an open space in the centre to afford light to the inner apartments, as well as for other purposes of domestic convenience. This area, when sufficiently large, was surrounded by a colonnade, contained a reservoir of water, frequently a fountain, and was in other respects arranged with a view to ornament as well as utility.

\* The first mention of "*glass windows*" occurs in the writings of St. Jerome. Neither Seneca, nor Pliny, who minutely describes the transparent stone used in windows, and also details the supposed particulars of the discovery of glass (*Hist. Nat.* l. xxxiv. 22 *et* 26), mention the latter as being used for that purpose. It is probable, therefore, that Mr. Eustace has committed an inadvertent mistake, when he incidentally says of the houses in Pompeii that "two had glass windows." (*See note, p. 48.*)

The authorities, and the arguments of commentators, on this subject, are amply discussed in *Beckmann's History of Inventions*, vol. iii. *Art. Mirrors.*

The outer door was furnished with a bell,<sup>3</sup> and sometimes, as a mark of peculiar distinction, and by particular privilege, opened against the street. The entrance was guarded by a slave, who,—but for what reason does not appear,—was kept in chains: he was armed with a staff, and attended by a dog; precautions that would seem to argue considerable dread of depredation and violence, were we not also informed, that this apparently important trust was not unfrequently delegated to old women.

Extensive gardens were attached to some palaces of the nobility; and many houses, though not possessed of that advantage, were surrounded with trees interspersed with statues,<sup>4</sup> of which latter it is supposed there were as many in Rome

<sup>3</sup> “*Bells*” were known to the earliest times of which we have any certain account. But the bells of the ancients were very small in comparison with those of modern times; since, according to Polydore Virgil, the invention of such as are hung in the towers, or steeples of Christian churches, did not occur till the latter end of the fourth or beginning of the fifth century, when they were introduced by Paulinus, bishop of Nola.”

*Busby's History of Music*, vol. i.

<sup>4</sup> “*Statues.*” Among these, there were in various parts of the city, 19 of gold,—as we are told, but more probably of brass gilt,—and 30 of solid silver.

as there were inhabitants. The Romans were, indeed, passionately fond of gardens; and as that taste could not be indulged to much extent in the city, it was displayed with great magnificence at their country-seats, or villas.

It does not fall within the scope of these sketches to present a general view of the city of Rome, much less a delineation of the countless public buildings by which it was adorned:<sup>1</sup> but the *Capitol* and the *Forum* would together constitute so prominent a feature in the picture of which they are intended to convey an idea, and are so frequently mentioned in history, that a brief outline of these edifices can scarcely be dispensed with.

The Capitol was a strong fortification, first founded by the second Tarquin, but subsequently destroyed, and restored, at three different periods.

<sup>1</sup> “*Public Buildings.*” Ancient Rome is said to have contained 420 temples,—5 regular theatres,—2 amphitheatres,—7 circuses,—16 public baths,—11 aqueducts, supplying a prodigious number of fountains,—and innumerable public halls, porticos, palaces, columns, and obelisks.

Modern Rome contains 346 churches,—150 palaces,—3 aqueducts,—13 fountains,—10 obelisks,—and the two celebrated columns of Trajan and Antoninus.

*Eustace's Glass. Tour, and Campbell's Italy, passim.*

The structure, of which there are still some vestiges, was completed in the reign of the emperor Domitian. Tradition ascribes its name to the circumstance of a human head having been found on digging for the foundation, *with the face entire*; but it seems unnecessary to seek in fable for the origin of an appellation which is in itself sufficiently expressive of dominion. It was erected on the Tarpeian rock, one of the highest of the seven hills of the city, from every part of which it was conspicuous. The approach to it was through the *via lata*, or broad-way, and the ascent was from the Forum, by a double flight of wide stairs leading to a triumphal arch, through which was the principal entrance. It contained temples dedicated to Jupiter Feretrius, to Juno, to Minerva, and various inferior deities, from the centre of which rose the lofty fane of Jupiter Capitolinus, elevated above the rest upon a towering eminence of one hundred steps. The portal was of bronze; the spacious dome was doubly gilt; the roof, and indeed the whole fabric, was refulgent to such excess that the very gilding alone is said to have cost two millions sterling!<sup>6</sup> The exterior was adorned

<sup>6</sup> "*The very gilding alone is said to have cost two millions sterling.*" Some authors have estimated it still higher. It

on all sides, from the base to the summit, with a multitude of statues surmounted by the figure of victory bearing the Roman eagle. The interior was crowded with trophies, the spoils of conquered nations; the image of the god was seated on a throne of gold; and every other decoration was of corresponding magnificence.

The Forum was the most ancient public building in Rome: it was composed of a vast assemblage of sumptuous, but irregular edifices, forming a spacious oblong square, extending from the Capitoline to the Palatine hills,—this crowned with the palace of the emperor, that with the temple of the tutelary deity,—and was entirely surrounded by a piazza, terminated at each end by a triumphal arch. It was here that the assemblies of the people were held; and

has been generally supposed that the dome of the temple was *plated with gold*, from an idea that the Romans were not acquainted with the modern art of *gilding*: but that is a mistake. They had not indeed attained the same perfection in the art of making gold-leaf; but it appears they had so far succeeded, that, in the time of Pliny, an ounce of gold was beaten into 750 leaves, each four inches square. At present the same quantity is made to cover a surface of 140 square feet. See *Beckmann's Hist. of Inventions*, vol. iv. art. *Gilding*.

from the rostra were delivered those celebrated harangues by which the tribunes stimulated the plebeians to resist the oppression of the patrician order. Here also justice was administered in vast halls appropriated to the different tribunals.<sup>7</sup> It was besides the residence of the chief bankers; it contained a variety of shops stored with a profusion of the most costly merchandize; and it was the mart for all important commercial transactions. Thus being the emporium of law, politics, and trade, it became equally the resort of the man of business and the lounge, and was the scene of the chief bustle of the city.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> These "*Halls of Justice*" were termed *Basilicæ*: at a later period some of them were converted into places of Christian worship: thus the *Basilica Vaticana* became a church under the well-known appellation of St. Peter's.

<sup>8</sup> "The glories of the '*Forum*' are now fled for ever; its temples are fallen; its sanctuaries have crumbled into dust; its colonnades encumber its pavements now buried under their remains. The walls of the rostra stripped of their ornaments, and doomed to eternal silence; a few shattered porticos, and here and there an insulated column standing in the midst of broken shafts, vast fragments of marble capitals and cornices heaped together in masses, remind the traveller that the field which he now traverses was once the Roman Forum."

Until the time of Julius Cæsar there was but this one forum; but he added another upon a more regular and costly, though not so extensive a plan; and succeeding emperors followed his example, and even rivalled him in expense. Trajan, in particular, erected one in a most sumptuous style, in the centre of which was placed the celebrated pillar known by his name, which still remains, together with the almost equally admired column of Antoninus; both splendid monuments of the perfection to which the arts had then attained, and of the munificence with which they were encouraged. These pillars,—which nearly resemble each other,—are about 120 feet in height, and are elaborately sculptured with a series of groups, winding spirally round the shafts, each descriptive of some military exploit in the annals of the respective emperors. The figures embrace every

“So far have the modern Romans forgotten the theatre of the glory, and of the imperial power, of their ancestors, as to degrade it into a common market for cattle, and sink its name, illustrated by every page of Roman history, into the contemptible appellation of *Campo Vaccino*.”

“Of all the ancient glory of the “*Capitol*” nothing now remains but the solid foundation, and vast substructions raised on the rock.” *Eustach's Class. Tour*, vol. i.

variety of dress and weapon, standard and hostile engine, employed in the armies of those days, and form a minute and most interesting representation of all the "pomp and circumstance" of Roman warfare. They were surmounted with the colossal statues of the monarchs in whose honor they were erected; but these the piety of modern times has long since replaced with those of St. Peter and St. Paul!

It is singular that the Romans, who paid such extraordinary attention to the construction of roads, that they were carried in various directions throughout the whole extent of their vast empire, and were formed with such solidity as still to remain, in many parts, in perfect repair, should yet have neglected to pave the streets of the capital. What renders this more to be wondered at, Herculaneum and Pompeii are found, wherever they have been explored, to have been not only paved, but provided with raised foot-ways; yet certain it is, the streets of Rome were only partially provided with pavement, and were entirely destitute of any separate path for the convenience of pedestrians, unless where that deficiency was supplied by the porticos in front of the houses.

Neither was the city lighted, nor watched.

There was a patrol indeed, but the police regulations were so defective, that the streets were the constant scene of midnight brawls, and foot passengers incurred no small danger of being either insulted by some drunken rioter, or knocked down by a robber. So far was the government from applying a remedy to the evil, which at length grew to an alarming height, that many of the dissolute emperors were themselves foremost in those frays, of which, and some other of the inconveniences of Rome, a humorous description has been given by Juvenal :—

“ There are who murder as an opiate take,  
And only, when no brawls await them, wake :  
Yet e’en these heroes, flush’d with youth and wine,  
All contest with the purple robe decline ;  
Securely give the lengthen’d train to pass,  
The sun-bright flambeaux, and the lamps of brass.—  
Me, whom the moon, or candle’s paler gleam,  
Whose wick I husband to the last extreme,  
Guides through the gloom, he braves, devoid of fear :  
The prelude to our doughty quarrel hear,  
If that be deem’d a quarrel, where, heaven knows,  
He only gives, and I receive, the blows !  
Across my path he strides, and bids me STAND !  
I bow, obsequious to the dread command ;  
What else remains, where madness, rage, combine  
With youth, and strength superior far to mine ?

" Whence come you, 'rogue?" he cries; " where  
 beans to-night,  
 Have stuff'd you thus? what cobbler clubb'd his mite,  
 For leeks, and sheep's-head porridge? dumb! quite  
 dumb!

Speak, or be kick'd.—Yet once again! your home?  
 Where shall I find you? At what beggar's stand,  
 (Temple or bridge) whimp'ring with outstretch'd hand?"  
 Whether I strive some humble plea to frame,  
 Or steal in silence by, 'tis just the same;  
 I'm beaten first, then dragg'd in rage away;  
 Bound to the peace, or punish'd for the fray!

Gifford, sat. iii.

The poet complains also of the frequency of midnight alarms of fire; and gives an appalling picture of the danger to be apprehended from burglary and assassination.

The city was cleansed by means of sewers of stupendous magnitude, and of such solid workmanship that, after a lapse of more than two thousand years, the principal drain, anciently the *Cloaca maxima*, is still entire. They were chiefly constructed in the earliest ages of the republic, and were constantly maintained in repair: openings were made into them at stated distances to receive the filth of the streets, and they were emptied by means of rapid streams which swept through them into the

Tiber; but it does not appear that the houses had any private communication with them. The principal thoroughfares seem to have had their full share of the various annoyances incident to the throng of a great metropolis; and the town was not altogether exempt from the nuisance of impurities being thrown from the windows:

—————"While by the throng  
Elbow'd and jostled, scarce we creep along,  
Sharp strokes from poles, tubs, rafters, doom'd to feel;  
And plaister'd o'er with mud, from head to heel:  
While the rude soldier gores us as he goes,  
Or marks, in blood, his progress on our toes!"<sup>9</sup>

"'Tis madness, dire providence of ill,  
To sup abroad, before you sign your will;  
Since fate in ambush lies, and marks his prey,  
From every wakeful window in the way:  
Pray, then,—and count your humble prayer well sped,  
If pots be only—emptied on your head."

*Gifford's Juvenal, sat. iii.*

The population of Rome has been variously estimated, but not accurately ascertained. The census, which was taken every fifth year, in-

<sup>9</sup> "Or marks, in blood, his progress on our toes." This alludes to the shoes worn by the soldiery, which were either shod with iron, or set with nails. They were called *Caliga*.

cluded all those who were entitled to the privileges of Roman citizens; the greater portion of whom, it has been already observed, were not resident in the city. From a census in the reign of the emperor Claudius, it appears that the number of men capable of bearing arms amounted to 6,945,000, and that of the inhabitants, of all classes, in Rome, *and the suburbs*, to 3,968,000. But the suburbs are not defined, and they are supposed to have extended to the distance of several miles. The actual population does not exceed 180,000 souls; and they occupy a space equal to about one third of the area within the walls of the former city. But the houses in ancient Rome were more lofty than those of modern construction, and could therefore accommodate a greater number of persons; particularly as the different floors appear to have been very generally occupied by separate tenants. The number of domestic slaves also far exceeded the present proportion of servants, and they were, no doubt, crowded into a much narrower compass. From these data we may infer, that if the city itself contained a million of inhabitants, that was, probably, their utmost limit. But if this conjecture, and the census of Claudius, be both correct, the suburban population must

either have been spread over a much wider extent than it seems reasonable to include within the precincts of a town ; or, it must have been much more dense than we should be led to conclude, either from an examination of the existing vestiges of former buildings, or a consideration of the space which must have been occupied by the numerous villas with which Rome was surrounded. The subject is, however, only important in an historical and political view ; and it is sufficient for our present enquiry to know, that, whatever may have been the real amount of the population, it certainly far exceeded that of any modern capital in Europe.

To those who reflect on the high degree of opulence and civilization to which the Romans had attained towards the close of the republic, it must afford matter of surprise to learn, that the city contained no public hospitals for the reception of the indigent. The temple of *Æsculapius* was, indeed, open to the infirm, and many, of every rank, who laboured under disease, were carried thither, to invoke the god of health ; but no human aid was afforded them ; and it was not until the beginning of the fifth century that the first infirmary was erected by a Christian lady, named *Fabiola*. Her benevo-

lent example was soon followed by others of her sex; and not only in Rome, but throughout Europe, the first establishment of those humane institutions was due to the introduction of Christianity.

The practice of physic seems to have been nearly confined to the administration of simples, which were prepared by the physicians themselves. These they obtained of dealers who were distinguished by various appellations, with the precise meaning of which we are not acquainted, but which, no doubt, pointed to the different branches of their trade. Compounders of medicines alone were unknown; and it is remarkable, that the word *apothecarius*, from which our "apothecary" is derived, merely signified the keeper of any warehouse, without reference to the commodities it contained. The *medicamentarii*, whose name approaches the nearest to the business of an apothecary, were designated, in the Theodosian code, as common poisoners! The medical profession was, however, in high repute: the principal practitioners were Greeks; and it appears that many of them derived as large an income from their practice, as the most celebrated physicians of the present day. In families of distinction, it was not

usual to have a slave instructed in medicine; several of whom obtained their freedom, and rose to eminence in their profession.

Notwithstanding the want of accommodation for the necessitous sick, and that infanticide was not looked upon as criminal in the view of the law, it has been thought probable that Rome, at an early period, contained foundling hospitals for the reception of deserted children. That orphans were provided for by the state, as well as by charitable individuals, has been proved by the discovery of an ancient document that was found in the neighbourhood of Placentia, in the year 1747. This curious relic of antiquity—which consists of a ponderous copper tablet, five feet in height, and ten in breadth—contains an inscription of more than six hundred lines, purporting, that the emperor Trajan had laid out a capital of 1,044,000 sesterces, on mortgage at five per cent. interest, which was to be divided monthly, among 245 boys and 34 girls born in wedlock, and two illegitimate children, belonging to the community of Velleia. The same tablet records a bequest, by one Cornelius, of a smaller amount, for a similar purpose: but it makes no allusion to orphan-houses for the reception of the chil-

dren, nor of the manner in which the money was to be applied; and, indeed, the sums appear much too moderate to have been intended for their entire support. Mention is, however, made of such houses in the Justinian code.

The *Sestertius*, or *sestérce*, was a silver coin, the value of which has been estimated at nearly two-pence of our money; consequently, the amount of Trajan's endowment for the orphans of Veleia was, nominally, equal to about 8400*l. sterling*; but as we are unacquainted with the proportion which money bore, at that period, to the necessities of life, we have no means of ascertaining its relative value at the present time. The other silver coins in circulation were all of small value. The only golden money of note was the *Aureus*, of the current value of 100 sesterces, and even this was not introduced until the middle of the sixth century of the Roman æra: its intrinsic worth was afterwards much diminished; but it continued, notwithstanding, to pass at its original rate, under the altered name of *Solidus*.

Large sums were usually computed by the *sestertium*, which was a nominal money of account, comprising 1000 sesterces. The *Talent of silver*, so frequently mentioned in history, consisted of twenty-four *sestertia*, or 24,000 sesterces.

would appear, from the terms on which an's benefaction was invested, that the al interest of money at that time was five cent.; but it was not so regulated by law; we learn from the correspondence of the rger Pliny, that he had himself placed a siderable sum on mortgage, during the same n, at six per cent., and that twelve per cent. customary on personal security.<sup>10</sup>

he sources of wealth that were opened to of rank, through the channels of com- ds in the distant provinces, and the various r lucrative employments in the service of overnment which is believed to have extended one hundred and twenty millions of sub- s,<sup>11</sup> will sufficiently account for the riches

*"Personal security."* Plin. Epist. l. vii. ep. 18, et ep. 62. It must, however, be remarked, that the int of 12 per cent. alluded to by Pliny, in the last tioned letter, was not at Rome, but in a distant ince. It affords a strong proof of the then flourish- state of the public finances, that the money to be laid belonged to government.

*"Subjects."* For an enumeration of the provinces of Roman empire, and a calculation of the total popula- and revenue, see *Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the . Emp.* vol. i. c. 1, 2, and 6.

possessed by many of the Romans, and for the prodigal expense in which the higher orders were enabled to indulge. The fortune of Crassus, one of the wealthiest of the patricians, has been estimated at a sum equivalent to three millions sterling; and there were many other individuals the value of whose possessions approached that amount. But there is reason to suppose that affluence was not so universally diffused, among the middle classes, as in the present age: many of the lower orders were reduced, as we have already seen, to the extreme of indigence; and the vague idea we are apt to form to ourselves of the vast opulence of Rome seems rather to arise from dazzling recitals of the splendor of the executive government, and the magnificence of the public buildings, with some striking, and perhaps exaggerated examples of lavish expenditure among the great, than from any solid proofs of general prosperity.

## CHAP. V.

Country Houses.—Description of Pliny's Villa.—Gardens.

THE Roman villa was originally nothing more than a farm-house of a very humble description, solely occupied by the industrious cultivator of the soil. But when increasing riches had inspired the citizen with a taste for new pleasures, and he had extended his enjoyments to the country, the term lost its former signification, and was used to denote the abode of opulence and luxury. It is fortunate for our researches into antiquity that an elaborate description of two of those villas has been recorded in the Letters of Pliny the younger; and though not intended for publication, it is singular, that it should be the most satisfactory account that has reached us. We shall select that of his summer residence in Tuscany, at about 150 miles distance from Rome; and however well known it may already be to the classical reader, its introduction here will not, it is presumed,

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require apology: nor would it be just to clothe it in any other language than his own, as rendered to us by his elegant translator Mr. Melmoth.

“My villa<sup>1</sup>”—says he—“is so advantageously situated, that it commands a full view of all the country around; yet you approach it by so insensible a rise, that you find yourself upon an eminence without perceiving you ascended. Behind, but at a great distance, stand the Apennine Mountains. In the calmest days we are refreshed by the winds that blow from thence, but so spent, as it were, by the long tract of land they travel over, that they are entirely divested of all their strength and violence before they reach us. The exposition of the principal front of the house is full south, and seems to invite the afternoon sun in summer (but somewhat earlier in winter) into

<sup>1</sup> “*My villa.*” This was Pliny’s principal seat. It has been imagined that some traces of it might yet be discovered near a town called *Stintignano*, in the neighbourhood of *Ponte di San Stefano*, about ten miles north of the Episcopal City of *Borgo di San Sepulchro*: but it would appear, from the enquiries made by the late Rev. Mr. Eustace, while on his “Classical Tour” through Italy, that there is but little foundation for that hope.

a spacious and well-proportioned portico, consisting of several members, particularly a porch built in the ancient manner. In the front of the portico is a sort of terrace, embellished with various figures, and bounded with a box hedge, from whence you descend by an easy slope, adorned with the representation of divers animals, in box, answering alternately to each other, into a lawn overspread with the soft, I had almost said the liquid *Acanthus*<sup>2</sup>: this is surrounded by a walk enclosed with tonsile evergreens, shaped into a variety of forms. Beyond it is the *Gestatio*<sup>3</sup>, laid out in the form of a circus, ornamented in the middle with box cut in numberless different figures, together with a plantation of shrubs, prevented by the shears from shooting up too high: the whole is fenced in with a wall covered by box, rising by different ranges to the top. On the outside of the wall lies a meadow, that owes as many beauties

<sup>2</sup> "*Acanthus*." Modern botanists term this plant garden-bear's-foot; but commentators are not agreed whether *moss* is not here meant; and it has been supposed that the *Acanthus* alluded to in a subsequent part of Pliny's description is *Brankursine*.

<sup>3</sup> The "*Gestatio*" was a place appropriated for taking exercise,—see chapter viii.

to nature, as all I have been describing within does to art; at the end of which are several other meadows and fields interspersed with thickets. At the extremity of this portico stands a grand dining-room, which opens upon one end of the terrace; as from the windows there is a very extensive prospect over the meadows up into the country, from whence you also have a view of the terrace, and such parts of the house which project forward, together with the woods enclosing the adjacent *Hippodrome*.<sup>4</sup> Opposite almost to the centre of the portico, stands a square edifice, which encompasses a small area, shaded by four plane-trees, in the midst of which a fountain rises, from whence the water, running over the edges of a marble bason, gently refreshes the surrounding plane-trees, and the verdure underneath them. This apartment consists of a bed-chamber, secured

<sup>4</sup> The "*Hippodrome*" was, in its proper signification, a place among the Grecians set apart for chariot-racing, and similar exercises, in the same manner as the Roman circus. But it seems here to be nothing more than a particular walk to which Pliny, probably, gave that name from its bearing some resemblance to the places so called.—For a description of the Grecian Hippodrome see *Dr. Hill's Essays on Ancient Greece*.

from every kind of noise, and which the light itself cannot penetrate; together with a common dining-room, which I use when I have none but intimate friends with me. A second portico looks upon this little area, and has the same prospect with the former I just now described. There is, besides, another room, which, being situated close to the nearest plane-tree, enjoys a constant shade and verdure; its sides are incrustated half way with carved marble; and from thence to the ceiling a foliage is painted with birds intermixed among the branches, which has an effect altogether as agreeable as that of the carving: at the basis of which, a little fountain, playing through several pipes into a vase, produces a most pleasing murmur. From a corner of this portico you enter into a very spacious chamber, opposite to the grand dining-room, which, from some of its windows, has a view of the terrace, and from others, of the meadow; as those in the front look upon a cascade, which entertains at once both the eye and the ear; for the water, dashing from a great height, foams over the marble bason that receives it below. This room is extremely warm in winter, being much exposed to the sun; and in a cloudy day, the heat of an ad-

joining stove very well supplies his absence. From hence you pass through a spacious and pleasant undressing-room into the cold-bath-room, in which is a large gloomy bath : but if you are disposed to swim more at large, or in warmer water, in the middle of the area is a wide bason for that purpose, and near it a reservoir from whence you may be supplied with cold water to brace yourself again if you should perceive you are too much relaxed by the warm. Contiguous to the cold-bath is another of a moderate degree of heat, which enjoys the kindly warmth of the sun, but not so intensely as that of the hot-bath, which projects farther. This last consists of three divisions, each of different degrees of heat : the two former lie entirely open to the sun ; the latter, though not so much exposed to its rays, receives an equal share of its light. Over the undressing-room is built the *Tennis-Court*,<sup>s</sup> which, by means of particular circles, admits

<sup>s</sup> “ *Tennis-Court.*” “ The circles were probably nothing more than particular marks on the floor, the success of their play depending on the ball’s alighting in such a circle after it had been struck ; which it was the adversary’s business to prevent : and the “ *different kinds of games*” this room was made for, might be diversified

of different kinds of games. Not far from the baths, is the stair-case leading to the inclosed portico, after you have first passed through three apartments: one of these looks upon the little area with the four plane-trees round it; the other has a sight of the meadows; and from the third you have a view of several vineyards: so that, they have as many different prospects as expositions. At one end of the inclosed portico, and, indeed, taken off from it, is a chamber that looks upon the hippodrome, the vineyards, and the mountains; adjoining is a room which has a full exposure to the sun, especially in the winter; and from whence runs an apartment that connects the hippodrome with the house: such is the form and aspect of the front. On the side rises an inclosed summer-portico, which has not only a prospect of the vineyards, but seems almost contiguous to them. From the middle of this portico, you enter a dining-room, cooled by the salutary breezes from the Appennine val-

by lines, or circles, on the walls or floor; like the game of tennis, which though it takes one entire room, may serve for several games of the like nature."

*Castel's Remarks on Tusculum.*

leys; from the windows in the back-front, which are extremely large, there is a prospect of the vineyards; as you have also another view of them from the folding-doors through the summer portico. Along that side of this dining-room, where there are no windows, runs a private stair-case, for the greater conveniency of serving at entertainments: at the farther end is a chamber, from whence the eye is pleased with the view of the vineyards, and (what is not less agreeable) of the portico. Underneath the room is an enclosed portico, somewhat resembling a grotto, which, enjoying in the midst of summer heats its ever natural coolness, neither admits nor wants the refreshment of external breezes. After you have passed both these porticos, at the end of the dining-room stands a third, which, as the day is more or less advanced, serves either for winter or summer use. It leads to two different apartments, one containing four chambers, the other three; each enjoying by turns, both sun and shade. In the front of these agreeable buildings, lies a very spacious hippodrome entirely open in the middle, by which means the eye, upon your first entrance, takes in its whole extent at one glance. It is encompassed on every side with

plane-trees,<sup>6</sup> covered with ivy; so that while their heads flourish with their own foliage, their bodies enjoy a borrowed verdure; and thus, the ivy twining round the trunk and branches, spreads from tree to tree, and connects them together. Between each plane-tree are planted box-trees, and between these bay-trees, which blend their shade with that of the planes. This plantation, forming a straight boundary on both sides of the hippodrome, bends at the farther end into a semicircle, which, being set round and sheltered with cypress-trees, varies the prospect, and casts a deeper gloom; while the inward circular walks (for there are several) enjoying an open exposure, are perfumed with roses, and correct, by a very pleasing contrast, the coolness of the shade with the warmth of the sun. Having passed through these several winding alleys, you enter a straight walk, which breaks out into

<sup>6</sup> The "*Plane-Tree*" was much cultivated among the Romans on account of its extraordinary shade, and the elder Pliny tells us, in his Natural History, that they nourished it with wine instead of water; "believing," as Sir William Temple in his Essay on Gardening, observes, "that this tree loved that liquor as well as those who drank under its shade."

into a variety of others, divided by box-hedges. In one place, you have a little meadow; in another, the box is cut into a thousand different forms; sometimes into letters, expressing the name of the master; sometimes that of the artificer: whilst here and there little obelisks rise intermixed alternately with fruit-trees: when, on a sudden, in the midst of this elegant regularity, you are surprised with an imitation of the negligent beauties of rural nature: in the centre of which lies a spot surrounded with a knot of dwarf-plane-trees. Beyond these is a walk planted with the smooth and twining acanthus, where the trees are also cut into a variety of names and shapes. At the upper end is an alcove of white marble, shaded with vines, supported by four small Carystian pillars.<sup>7</sup> From this bench the water gushing through several little pipes, as if it were pressed out by the weight of the persons who repose themselves upon it, falls into a stone cistern underneath, from whence it is received into a fine polished marble bason, so artfully contrived,

<sup>7</sup> "*Carystian Pillars.*" This marble was obtained from an Island in the Grecian Archipelago, now called *Negroponte*. It is supposed to have been of that kind which we call verd-antique.

that it is always full without ever overflowing. When I sup here, this basin serves for a table, the largest sort of dishes being placed round the margin, while the smaller ones swim about in the form of little vessels and water-fowl. Corresponding to this, is a fountain which is incessantly emptying and filling; for the water, which it throws up a great height, falling back into it, is, by means of two openings, returned as fast as it is received. Fronting the alcove (and which reflects as great an ornament to it as it borrows from it,) stands a summer-house of exquisite marble, the doors whereof project, and open into a green inclosure; as from its upper and lower windows, the eye is presented with a variety of different verdures. Next to this is a little private recess, (which, though it seems distinct, may be laid into the same room,) furnished with a couch; and, notwithstanding it has windows on every side, yet it enjoys a very agreeable gloominess, by means of a spreading vine which climbs to the top, and entirely overshades it. Here you may recline and fancy yourself in a wood; with this difference only, that you are not exposed to the weather. In this place a fountain also rises and instantly disappears: in different quarters are disposed several marble seats, which serve,

no less than the summer-house, as so many reliefs after one is wearied with walking. Near each seat is a little fountain; and, throughout the whole hippodrome, several small rills run murmuring along, wheresoever the hand of art thought proper to conduct them, watering here and there different spots of verdure, and in their progress, refreshing the whole.”<sup>a</sup>

Spacious as this villa appears to have been, it was only one, of four, which belonged to the same person; each of which—if we may judge from a description which he has left of another of them, was of nearly equal extent: and if we reflect, that Pliny, although a nobleman of high rank, was not looked upon as a man of large fortune, and was, besides, remarkable for his prudence and moderation, we may form some idea of the magnificence displayed in the houses of those whose taste for luxury and expense was uncontrolled by similar considerations.

<sup>a</sup> This description has been extracted from B. v. ep. 6. of *Pliny's Letters*; and the same work affords equally ample details of another of that author's villas, called *Laurentinum*, situated at a few miles distance from Rome, in the vicinity of the Port of Ostia: they are in B. ii. ep. 17., and they who may wish for still further information will find copious particulars in *Cartel's Villas of the Ancients*.

But it will not escape observation, that in no part of this minute description is there any allusion to a *flower-garden*. Nor, although they worshipped a Deity, who was supposed to preside over flowers, does it any where appear that the Romans cultivated a taste for botany, or paid any attention to the improvement of their indigenous plants, or to the acquisition of exotics. Though it is probable that, at a later period than that in which Pliny wrote, their intercourse with the nations of the East, where a passion for flowers seems ever to have prevailed, gradually furnished them with that fragrant collection which now blooms in the Italian parterre. Their style of ornamental gardening was formal and heavy; more calculated to procure shade than to create scenery, and better adapted to the enjoyment of exercise than of prospect. Gloomy walks, bounded by high clipped hedges, over-shadowed with evergreens, and encumbered with statues, were the prevailing taste; and it has not yet been entirely exploded from the gardens of modern Italy. It is also worthy of remark, that the laurel, with which we are wont to crown the heroes of antiquity, is supposed not to have had a place in the gardens of the ancients. The plant mentioned in the poets by the name of *laurus*, a very

learned botanist conjectures to have been the *bay-tree*;<sup>9</sup> and he assigns as one, apparently conclusive, reason, the odour ascribed to it, in Virgil's pastorals, in which the laurel is deficient:—

“*Et vos, o lauri, carpam, et tē proxime, myrte,  
Sic posita, quoniam SUAVES miscetis ODORIBUS.*”

Eclog. ii.

“The laurel and the myrtle *sweets* agree,  
And both in *nosegays* shall be bound for thee.”

Dryden.

Some villas were surrounded by enclosed parks, in which deer, and various wild animals were kept; but in general they had only extensive gardens. Spacious fish-ponds were a usual

<sup>9</sup> “*Bay-tree.*” The botanist alluded to (*Professor Martyn, of Cambridge,*) observes, “Our laurel was hardly known in Europe till the latter end of the 16th century, about which time it seems to have been brought from Trebizond to Constantinople, and from thence into most parts of Europe. The laurel has no fine smell, which is a property ascribed to it by Virgil in the second Eclogue, and again in the sixth *Enëid*; nor is the laurel remarkable for crackling in the fire, of which there is abundant mention with regard to the *laurus*. These characters agree very well with the bay-tree, which seems to be, most certainly, the *laurus* of the ancients; and is at this time frequent in the woods and hedges of Italy. *Notes upon the Georgics.*”

appendage: and, through a refinement of false taste, we are told, that in order to render the sheep that pastured on the lawns ornamental, as well as useful, it was not unusual to dye their fleeces of various colours.

Our surprise at the number of villas that were maintained by some individuals, will in a great measure cease, if we reflect, that the landed property of the Romans was in general cultivated on their own account by their slaves, and therefore required their frequent personal superintendence. There is also reason to believe, that, even when their estates were farmed by tenants, the rent was rather paid in kind than in money, and was more frequently estimated at a certain portion of the harvest, than at a fixed annual valuation.

## CHAP. VI.

Solar-dials.—Water-Clocks.—Clepsydre.—Divisions of the day and night.—Vigils of the Romans and the Jews.—Ancient division of the year.—Intercalary Months.—Julian Year.—New Style.—Kalends, Nones, and Ides.—Computation by Weeks.—Festivals.—Superstition.—Augurs.—Aruspices.—Astrologers.—Pontiffs.—Priests.—Vestals.—Religion.

ROME had existed four hundred and sixty years ere its inhabitants distinguished any other divisions of the day than morning, noon, and night. The laws of the twelve tables only mention the rising and the setting of the sun; and it was not until some years after their promulgation, that the meridian was proclaimed from the Senate-house, on those days when the sun's height could be ascertained by actual observation.

Pliny<sup>1</sup> tells us, on the faith of an ancient historian, that the first instrument used by the Romans for the measurement of time, was a solar dial, which the Censor L. Papirius Cursor

<sup>1</sup> *Plin. Hist. Nat.* l. vii. c. 60,

placed in the porch of the Temple of Quirinus, twelve years before the war with Pyrrhus. But he seems to doubt the accuracy of that account, and prefers that of Varro, who attributes its introduction to M. Valerius Messala, and says, that it was brought from Sicily in the year of Rome 477, and was fixed on a pillar of the Rostra, during the first punic war. Although this dial, being calculated for a different meridian, could not mark the time with precision at Rome, it was not the less conformed to during an entire century, until Q. Marcus Philippus, who was censor along with Paulus Emilius, erected one more correct; and of all the acts of his censorship it was that which obtained him the greatest applause. A few years afterwards, in 595, Scipio Nasica exhibited a water-clock, which ascertained the hours during the night as well as the day.

Vitruvius<sup>2</sup> attributes the invention of water-clocks to Ctesibius, a native of Alexandria, who lived in the time of the two first Ptolemies. To form an idea of them, we must imagine a basin filled with water, which was emptied in twelve hours, by means of a small hole in the bottom,

\* *Vitruv. de Architect.* l. ix. c. 9.

into another vessel of equal capacity, in which the water rose by degrees around a column on which the hours were marked perpendicularly. They were usually ornamented with a small figure, made of cork, which floated on the surface, and pointed to the characters on the column. These clocks differed from those which the ancients denominated *Clepsydræ*; which consisted of a glass, of a pyramidal, or conic form, perforated at the base, and which, being filled with a liquid, denoted the time, as it subsided, by means of lines traced on the sides. The Romans made use of both, with several slight varieties of construction, and termed them night-clocks, and winter-clocks, in contradistinction to the dials, which were useless during the night, and of but little service, in winter, during the day. They were wholly unacquainted with the clocks at present in use, and many ages passed before the art of constructing them was discovered. Both the period and the inventor are uncertain: some authors attribute the idea to an Archdeacon of Verona, named Pacificus, who died in 846; others to the Monk Gerbert, who became Pope in the year 999, by the title of Silvester II.; and others again, insist that nothing positive can be ascer-

tained on the subject. Among the latter, Professor Beckmann, whose authority is entitled to the greatest attention, ascribes the invention to the eleventh century, and seems inclined to confer the honor of it on the Saracens.

In families of distinction, slaves were kept purposely to attend to the clocks, and report the hour. It has been supposed, that from this custom was derived that of watchmen announcing the time of night, which prevails throughout a great part of Europe; but it does not anywhere appear that such was the public practice in Rome.

The ancient Romans divided the day and night into twelve hours each, counting from the rising to the setting of the sun, without distinction of season; the hours of the day were, therefore, longer than those of the night in summer, and shorter in winter, and could only be equal during the Equinox.<sup>3</sup> The first hour of the morning commencing at sunrise, the sixth was noon, and the twelfth sunset; night then began, and the sixth hour was midnight. This division

<sup>3</sup> "*Equinox.*" At this period of the year, the Roman hours would answer to our own in the following manner:  
 Roman . . . i. ii. iii. iv. v. vi. vii. viii. ix. x. xi. xii.  
 English . . vii. viii. ix. x. xi. xii. i. ii. iii. iv. v. vi.

of time originated with the Babylonians, from whom the Greeks first received, and the Romans, in imitation of them, afterwards adopted it. But, under the emperors, they began to perceive that it was inconvenient; and the manner, now in use, of counting the twenty-four hours in two equal divisions, from midnight to midnight, was gradually introduced. It appears that it was already established in the reign of Hadrian; and it has been generally adopted throughout Europe, with the exception of Italy, where they count the hours in succession, without any division, from the setting of the sun.

The day was, besides, divided into four equal parts, and the night into as many watches. The divisions of the day were distinguished by the number of the hour at which each commenced: the first watch of the night, beginning at sunset, was termed *evening*; the second, *midnight*; the third, *cock-crowing*; and the fourth, *the time of silence*. Mention is made of these vigils in the New Testament—in Luke xii. 38. —Matt. xiv. 28.—and in Mark xiii. 35. where our Saviour, recommending his disciples to watch and pray, says—“*watch ye therefore; for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the*

*cock-crowing, or in the morning.*"—But the Old Testament, although it speaks of the first, second, and third watch, no where alludes to a fourth; for the Jews only divided the night into three, and they borrowed the division of it into four from the Romans; from whom they also took the method of reckoning twelve hours to the day, and the same number to the night.

The year was first arranged in parts by Romulus: it then consisted of only ten lunar months, commencing with March—*Martius*, so called from Mars, his supposed father. It is imagined that April—*Aprilis*, took its name from a Greek appellation of Venus; May—*Maius*, from Maia the mother of Mercury; and June—*Junius*, from the goddess Juno. The others were called, from the order in which they occurred, *Quintilis*, *Sextilis*, *September*, *October*, *November*, and *December*; but *Quintilis* was afterwards changed to *Julius*—July, in honour of Julius Cæsar, and *Sextilis* to *Augustus*—August, in that of the emperor of that name. Numa divided it into twelve lunar months, and added January—*Januarius*, which he so named after the god Janus; and February—*Februarius*—then the last month—from a sacrifice termed *Februalia*, which was perform-

ed at that period in expiation of the sins of the entire year. But, as this mode of division did not correspond with the course of the sun, he ordained that an *intercalary month* should be added every other year. His intention was, that it should consist of a number of days equal to the difference between the lunar months and the solar year : but, the intercalation being entrusted to the Pontiffs, they, from interested motives, used to insert fewer, or more days, and thus made the current year shorter or longer, as best suited the views of those among their friends whose employments in the service of the state terminated along with it ; in consequence of which irregularity, the months were, in process of time, transposed from their proper seasons, and the termination of the year became uncertain. To remedy this abuse, Julius Cæsar abolished the intercalary month ; and, with the assistance of Sosigenes, a skilful astronomer of Alexandria, he, in the year of Rome 707, arranged the year according to the course of the sun, commencing with the first of January, and assigned to each month the number of days which they still retain. This is the celebrated *Julian*, or *solar year*, which has been since maintained, without any other alteration than

that of the *new style*, introduced by Pope Gregory A. D. 1582, and adopted in England in 1752, when eleven days were dropped between the 2d and 14th of September ; by which means the error in the original calculation was corrected : and a repetition of it is guarded against for a long period of the future, by the insertion of one intercalary day in every fourth, or leap-year.\*

Great praise is given, and is, unquestionably, eminently due to the astronomers who regulated the Gregorian year, and they who are best acquainted with the abstruseness of the requisite calculations will most highly appreciate the value of their labours. But when we consider the probable imperfection of all mathematical instruments in the time of Sosigenes, and the total want of telescopes, we cannot but view with admiration, not unmixed with astonishment, that

\* "*Leap-Year.*" As the error in the Julian year was not quite six hours, the intercalation of a day in every fourth year cannot rectify the error with precision ; but, as the difference is only about three quarters of an hour in four years, more than a century must elapse ere it can amount to an entire day ; and then, that error will be rectified by omitting the intercalation in one leap-year.

comprehensive genius which, in the infancy of science, could surmount such difficulties, and arrange a system that succeeding ages have only been able to improve, but not to alter.

The Roman months were divided into three parts, by days denominated *Kalends*, *Nones*, and *Ides*. They commenced with the *Kalends*: the *Nones* occurred on the 5th, and the *Ides* on the 13th; except in March, May, July, and October, when they fell on the 7th and 15th. The days were counted backwards in their respective divisions: thus, the 2d of the month was termed the 4th of the *Kalends*; the 6th, the eighth of the *Nones*; and the 14th, the eighteenth of the *Ides*; except in those months already particularized, when the 2d was the sixth of the *Kalends*, and the 8th the eighth of the *Nones*; and in those other, in which a variation in their length occasioned a corresponding alteration in number the of the *Ides*.

The manner of reckoning by weeks was not introduced until late in the second century of the Christian æra: it was borrowed from the Egyptians, and the days were named after the planets, which appellations they still partially retain in the modern languages.

Previous to that period, every ninth day was called *Nundinum*, and was devoted to public business; but there does not appear to have been any term to denote the intermediate space.

The public festivals were numerous, and being all considered as sacred from labour, were extremely detrimental to the interests of the state. To these, the veneration in which the Romans held their ancestors, induced them to add many private commemorations, which were equally observed as holidays; and their superstition prevented them from engaging in any undertaking on those days which, being deemed unfortunate, were marked black in the kalendar: thus, a great portion of the year was either consumed in religious ceremonies, or wasted in idleness, with but little advantage to the morals, and deeply to the prejudice of the fortunes of the people.

The Romans were, indeed, so strongly tainted with superstition, that many circumstances evincing it are recorded of their most eminent men. Their most judicious historians have not scrupled to record accounts of dreams and apparitions: and we find among the correspondence of even the enlightened younger Pliny,

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power over the minds of the people. The omens they condescended to notice, were frequently not only of the most trifling, but even ridiculous nature. Without attempting the endless task of enumerating them, it may be sufficient to observe, that, during war, no general took the field without being accompanied by a sacred brood of chickens, from the feeding of which were drawn the most important presages.

There was also a minor class of professors in the science of divination, styled *Aruspices*, whose predictions were guided by remarks on the palpitating entrails of newly slaughtered victims, and the circumstances attending sacrifices. Besides these, there was a crowd of pretended astrologers, distinguished by different appellations according to the particular branch in which they affected to excel; and it is a curious fact, that, even in those days, the principal fortune-tellers were Egyptians.

Although the Augur and the Aruspex both assisted at some religious ceremonies, yet they cannot correctly be said to have belonged to the priesthood; which was only composed of two orders, the pontiffs, and the ministers of the temples.

The *Pontiffs* were the dignitaries of the Roman Hierarchy. They presided over every thing appertaining to the public worship; and, collectively, formed a tribunal entitled the *College of Pontiffs*, which held jurisdiction over all offences against religion, and possessed an authority that extended, in some cases, to the power of inflicting capital punishment. Their number was at first limited to four, but was afterwards gradually extended, and it is uncertain of how many the college at last consisted. It was presided by a superior, styled the *Pontifex maximus*, the dignity of whose office was so great, that it was at length assumed by the emperors; and although we may conclude that the duties annexed to it had ceased in the time of the Christian sovereigns, yet the title was continued by them until the reign of Theodosius.

The minor order, or *Priests of the Temples*, were those whose services were dedicated to some particular god, whom they worshipped with rites that were peculiar to each. They were distinguished by various titles appropriate to the deity they served; but the high-priest of each was called *Flamen*, and his office, especially if devoted to one of the superior di-

vinities, was one of high rank: of these the Flamen of Jupiter was the most eminent, and it appears that his wife participated in some of his sacred functions. It was essential to the sacerdotal character to be without bodily defect; wherefore a priest who was maimed, even through accident, could no longer officiate. But history has not acquainted us whether there was any particular form of education for those destined to the priesthood, or any fixed age at which they were admitted; nor in what manner their services were afterwards remunerated; and we can only gather from the unconnected accounts of various authors, that they were expected to be persons of pure morals, and respectable family, and that some provision was certainly made for them.

The priestesses of Vesta,—more generally known by the appellation of *Vestal Virgins*,—were the guardians of the Penates of the Roman people, and of the sacred fire that was preserved in the temple of the goddess. The motive for maintaining it is now unknown, but whatever may have been the superstition in which it originated, it was of the most remote antiquity, as the fire is supposed to have been brought with the Penates from Troy; to which tradition

Virgil distinctly alludes in that part of the *Æneid* where the ghost of Hector warns *Æneas* to depart :—

“ Now Troy to thee commends her future state,  
And gives her gods companions of thy fate :  
From their assistance happier walls expect,  
Which, wandering long, at last thou shalt erect—”  
He said, and brought me from their bless’d abodes,  
The venerable statues of the gods,  
With ancient *Vesta* from the sacred choir,  
The wreaths and relics of the ‘ immortal fire.’

*Dryden, b. ii.*

This venerated deposit was guarded with pious care throughout every revolution of the commonwealth : the holy flame was annually renewed from the rays of the sun, and if extinguished through any accident it was viewed as an omen of unfortunate portent. The vestals enjoyed many valuable privileges, and were regarded with distinguished respect. They were only six in number, and were selected by the pontifex maximus, with the consent of their parents, at any age from six until sixteen. They were only bound to their ministry during the term of thirty years, at the expiration of which they were at liberty to leave the temple, and marry ; but if, during that period, they in-

## CHAP. VII.

Morning Avocations. — Temples. — Private Oratories. —  
 Chapel of Alexander Severus. — Mode of Worship. —  
 Scipio. — Visits. — Remuneration to Attendants. — Ge-  
 neral Business. — Candidates for Office. — Nomencla-  
 tors. — Mode of Salutation. — Breakfast and Dinner.

So various are the tastes and passions, and so much are the habits of life governed by them, that an attempt to depict the aberrations from the established usages of society would become an endless task, and is more properly the province of the drama, or of the satirist, than of a brief essay like the present. Neither can we undertake a description of the customs of every class in ancient Rome, but chiefly confining ourselves to that middle order between the great patrician and the plebeian, we shall endeavour to follow those men, who, without being devoted to ambition, were not without weight in the commonwealth; who, without abandoning themselves to dissipation, set a just value on the pleasures of society; and who, equally attentive to the interests of

their families, and to those of the state, divided their time between the occupations of business, and the duties, or relaxation, of private life.

Persons of this rank employed the first part of the morning in the duties of religion. The temples were opened before the dawn, and were lighted up for the convenience of those whom either devotion or necessity induced to visit them at that early hour. It would have been considered profane to have commenced the common avocations of the day until this obligation had been fulfilled; and we may collect from a passage in the *Æneid*, that the first blush of morn was consecrated to the matins of the pious:—

“Wake, son of Venus, from thy pleasing dreams:  
And, when the setting stars are lost in day,  
To Juno’s power thy just devotion pay.”

*Dryden, book viii.*

The worship of their gods consisted in adoration, and invocation by public and private prayer; in offerings of incense and perfumes; and hymns chanted in their praise, to the sound of musical instruments, by young persons, of both sexes, chosen from among the first families. They who could not attend at the temples,

fulfilled this duty in their private oratory; where the rich offered sacrifices, and the poor, vows and supplication. Prayers were also offered in the evening; but only to the infernal gods, who divided the respect of the Romans with the celestial deities.

The privacy in which the household gods were worshipped, rendered it incumbent on those families who could afford it, to have a chapel in their dwelling house for the solemnization of their peculiar rites. The Emperor Alexander Severus had two in his palace, where the different objects of his veneration were divided into distinct classes; the one dedicated to Virtue, the other to Talents. The first contained the statues of the good in every rank, and of every faith, who, by their precepts or example, might be considered as benefactors to mankind: among these, *Orpheus*,—*Abraham*,—*Appollonius of Tyanes*,—and *Our Saviour, Jesus Christ*,<sup>1</sup> were, by him, equally adored: an incongruous assemblage, but one from which we may infer an inclination in that prince to

<sup>1</sup> “*Jesus Christ*.” The Emperor Tiberius ordered that our Saviour should be enrolled among the Roman gods; but the senate refused obedience to the mandate.

honor virtue in whatever garb he might find it. The second was reserved for the illustrious in arms, or in the arts, — *Achilles*, — *Alexander the Great*, — *Cicero*, — *Virgil*, and other celebrated personages.

While the priest pronounced the prayers, the assistants recited them, standing, their faces turned towards the east, and envelopped in their mantles, lest their attention should be distracted by any object of ill omen. They invoked the gods by name, and, to avoid the possibility of mistake, they were accustomed to add — “whether thou art god, or goddess.” Whilst praying, they touched the altar with their fingers, then carried the hand to their lips, and afterwards extended it towards the image of the god, of which they also embraced the knees, which were considered as the symbols of mercy. Their devotions lasted a considerable time; generally more than an hour; but we must be cautious how we thence infer that they were actuated by sincere piety. Had they been satisfied with praying, according to the well known adage of Juvenal, for “health of body, and of mind,” their orisons would probably have been shorter; but the number of real and imaginary wants which they hoped to supply,

and the various gods whom they were obliged to propitiate, according to each separate necessity, occasioned a tedious series of ceremonies, from which those who are satisfied with adoring the Creator in spirit, and in truth, are exempt. Seneca asserts,<sup>2</sup> that the folly of some went so far as to supplicate the gods for success in pursuits which they would have blushed to acknowledge to their fellow-men; and Horace has left a lively description of this species of hypocrisy:—

Your honest man, on whom with awful praise,  
The forum, and the courts of justice gaze,  
If e'er he make a public sacrifice,  
“Dread Janus! Phœbus!” clear and loud he cries—  
But when his pray'r in earnest is prefer'd,  
Scarce move his lips, afraid of being heard:  
“Beauteous Laverna! <sup>3</sup> my petition hear!  
“Let me with truth and sanctity appear.  
“Oh! give me to deceive, and with a veil  
“Of darkness, and of night, my crimes conceal.”

Francis, b. i. ep. 16.

Ambition and avarice, indeed, had frequently

<sup>2</sup> Seneca, ep. 10. There is not, amongst all the valuable writings of this great philosopher, a finer precept than that with which this epistle is concluded:—“*Sic vive cum hominibus, tanquam Deus videat; sic loquere cum Deo, tanquam homines audiant.*”

<sup>3</sup> “Laverna,” the goddess of rogues and thieves.

the greatest share in their apparent zeal, and religion was too often but a cloak to cover more secret motives. Livy assures us,<sup>4</sup> that P. Scipio acquired his great reputation, not so much by the talents and virtues which he really possessed, as by the address with which he persuaded the people of his superior sanctity. From his first introduction into society he was careful never to perform any public act without first passing a considerable time in the temple, in meditation and prayer. This rule, thus early prescribed to himself, he closely adhered to through life; and might have obtained credit with posterity for sincerity, had he not pretended to be inspired in all he undertook by dreams and apparitions, or by revelations from the gods themselves: a superstition to which he could not have been himself the dupe, and which, therefore, at once betrays his artifice.

On leaving the temple, the business of the day began, and amongst its most important duties was that of paying visits.

The great have ever been courted by their inferiors; but in Rome, during the time of the emperors particularly, adulation became a sys-

<sup>4</sup> *Tit. Liv.* l. 26. c. 19.

tem, and flattery a science. In the early period of their history, when equality reigned among the people, their manners were frank, though coarse, partaking of their occupations as soldiers and husbandmen. But as wealth and population increased, and civilization advanced, new distinctions arose in society; luxury gave birth to wants which agriculture alone could not supply; and necessity rendered the inferior classes submissive and respectful, while the interests of ambition, which were dependent on popularity, made the patricians affable. Towards the close of the republic, literature, and an intercourse with the Greeks—then the most polished nation of the world, carried the urbanity of Roman manners to the highest point of perfection: but influenced at length by the effeminacy of the Orientals, enervated by voluptuousness, and corrupted by a venal government, they insensibly declined; and degenerated, before the fall of the empire, into fawning servility on the one part, and overbearing arrogance on the other.

It then became an indispensable duty to attend the levee, every morning, of those to whom they were, or wished to appear attached. The citizen,—not unfrequently the magistrate,—ran

from door to door to pay court to some great man, who, in his turn, rendered the same homage to another, and all Rome was one common scene of the interchange of civility,—and insincerity. Pliny the younger calls these visits “*devoirs before the dawn*”—and Juvenal describes them as made at so early an hour that the yawning visitants had not time to arrange their dress. If they were inconvenient to those who paid, we may safely conclude that they were scarcely less so to those who received them, and Martial complains of a nobleman who evaded his.<sup>3</sup>

The authors just cited lived under the Em-

<sup>3</sup> “*Devoirs before the dawn* : ” “*Officia antelucana.*”—

*Plin. Epist. l. iii. ep. 12.*

————— Go now, supremely blest,  
Enjoy the meed for which you broke your rest,  
And loose and slipshod, ran your vows to pay,  
What time the fading stars announced the day ;  
Or at an earlier, when with slow roll,  
Thy frozen wain Boötes, turn'd the pole ;  
Yet trembling, lest the levee should be o'er,  
And the full court retiring from the door !

*Gifford's Juvenal, sat. v.*

Since your return to Rome I five times went  
To wish you well, and pay my compliment ;  
“*Busy, not up,*” hath been my answer still :  
Adieu ! you will not let me wish you well.

*Hay's Martia, b. ix. epig. 8.*

perors Domitian, Nerva, and Trajan: but similar visits were made in the time of the republic; with this difference, however, that their only object then was to show respect to rank and virtue. Cicero frequently mentions them: and his own apartments were filled, every morning, with a multitude of citizens, amongst whom were many of the most distinguished patricians.

The clients assembled in the atrium of their patron, which was usually ornamented with the busts and statues of his ancestors. There they amused themselves in conversation until he chose to make his appearance, or they were informed that he had eluded their attentions, or could not receive them; but if he went out in public, they surrounded his chair, and thus accompanied him both going and returning. This retinue was at length considered by the great as a necessary appendage to their rank, and they seldom appeared abroad without a numerous train of slaves, freedmen, and clients: a costly species of vanity; for so much had the original connexion between patron and client then degenerated, that those who were not slaves were paid for their attendance. Indeed, if Juvenal does

not belie them, even men of rank stooped to gratify their avarice by swelling the pomp of this pageant, for which they received a gratuity in money, contemptuously denominated *sportula*, a term applied to portions of victuals distributed at the houses of patricians to their needy retainers. This dole was given in lieu of a supper, to which the attendant clients were usually invited in former times, ere solid hospitality had been superseded by ostentation and empty pomp: it was established by law, and could therefore be demanded as a right; and it appears, from some passages in the satirists of the day, that its distribution gave rise to frequent contention among the applicants, and to some whimsical artifice to secure a double portion :—

Now, at the gate, a paltry largess lies,  
And eager hands and tongues dispute the prize.  
But first (lest some false claimant should be found,)  
The wary steward takes his anxious round,  
And pries in every face; then calls aloud,  
“Come forth ye great Dardanians,<sup>6</sup> from the crowd!”

<sup>6</sup> “*Ye great Dardanians.*” “The old nobility of Rome affected to derive their origin from the great families of Troy.” *Gifford.*

For, mix'd with us, e'en these besiege the door,  
 And scramble for—the pittance of the poor!  
 “Despatch the *Prætor* first,” the master cries,  
 “And next the *Tribune*.” ‘No, not so;’ replies  
 The freedman, bustling through, ‘first come is, still,  
 ‘First serv’d; and I may claim my right, and will!’—

Wedg’d in thick ranks before the donor’s gates,  
 A phalanx firm, of chairs and litters, waits:  
 Thither one husband, at the risk of life,  
 Hurries his teeming, or his bedrid wife;  
 Another, practised in the gainful part,  
 With deeper cunning tops the beggar’s part;  
 Plants at his side a close and empty chair:  
 “My galla-master;—give me galla’s share.”  
 ‘Galla!’ the porter cries; ‘let her look out.’  
 “Sir, she’s asleep. Nay, give me;—can you doubt!”

*Gifford’s Juvenal, sat. i.*

The sum usually given did not exceed twenty pence of our money: and when we consider that those who claimed it were far from belonging to the very lowest class of society, it serves to exhibit a large proportion of the citizens in a very degraded state; and affords a convincing proof, that Rome, in its greatest splendor and apparent prosperity, was the abode of much real want and misery.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> “*Sportula*.” Pliny mentions, that, in the province of which he was governor, it was customary, on cele-

These visits occupied the early part of the morning, after the devotions in the temples: but although the custom was general with those who had an object to attain by it, there were others, who, more independent, or having more important avocations to attend, did not make such a sacrifice of their time. Many of the knights were bankers; others acted in the capacity of notaries, making, and keeping a registry of, contracts, deeds, and other legal instruments; and the common business of life—the maintenance and advancement of themselves and families,—then, as now, occupied the attention of the mass of the population. There were occasions, however, on which the motive for this personal attendance was equally amiable and disinterested. When any distinguished magistrate, or officer, returned from the provinces, or the army, crowds went from the city to meet and welcome him; they then conducted him to his house, the

brating a family festivity, to invite *the whole senate*, (i. e. the provincial senate,) with a considerable part of the commonalty, to a feast, and to distribute to *each* of the company, a dole of about fifteen-pence. He adds, that so many as a thousand persons sometimes partook of this bounty. *Plin. Epist. l. x. ep. 117.*

avenues to which were previously ornamented with garlands of flowers: and on leaving the city for a foreign command, a similar escort always attended. The same custom was prevalent in private life: no person, however humble his station, commenced a journey without being accompanied on a part of it by some of his family and friends putting up prayers for his safety and success: nor returned without being greeted with equal cordiality.

In consequence of the frequent changes in the magistracy, the canvassing for votes was reduced to a regular system, and some persons were almost constantly so employed during the forenoon. Candidates for office were accompanied by their clients, friends, and relatives, who recommended them, even in the public streets, to those of their acquaintance by whom they were met. And, as it was a mark of politeness among the Romans, as well as the Greeks, to salute every one by their names and titles, and yet quite impossible for candidates to recollect those of all the strangers to whom they might be introduced, they were usually attended by slaves, whose duty it was to refresh their memory. Those who aspired to offices of rank in the state kept such slaves

constantly about them: they were called *Nomenclators*,<sup>a</sup> and their sole occupation was to inform themselves of the names, fortune, rank, and connexions, of the citizens of any note; to be familiar with their persons; and, when they met them in the streets, to whisper their intelligence to their master, that he might be enabled to address them with the familiarity of an acquaintance:—an extreme of affability which, however it may appear to approach adulation, was the almost necessary consequence of a form of government which vested the nomination to all public employments in the people.

In saluting, the hand first touched the lips, and was then advanced towards the person saluted, in the same manner as to the gods. Sometimes, as a mark of extraordinary respect, they kissed the hand of the person saluted. Men in the army merely lowered their arms. But none of these salutations were accompanied by any inclination of the body until long after the decline of the republic.

The *Third Hour*, corresponding with our nine in the morning, was dedicated to the

<sup>a</sup> “*Nomenclators* :”—*Vide Horat. l. i. ep. 6.*

business of the courts of law, except on those days which religion had consecrated to repose, or which were destined to the more important meeting of the general assembly. When the public attention was not occupied, either with affairs of state in the assembly, or great trials in the courts,—which, however, was rarely the case after Rome became possessed of the provinces of which her vast empire was composed,—the *Third, Fourth, and Fifth Hours*, were usually passed in conversation in the porticos and forum: the measures of government were freely discussed, and, as there were no laws to repress opinion, men in power were not spared when their conduct merited censure. Tiberius was the first who regarded animadversions on the government as criminal. Surrounded by spies, and informers, who nourished his suspicions, and inflamed his jealousy of the public opinion, nothing was indifferent to that tyrant: a word spoken in jest, or in the freedom and confidence of private conversation, was often construed as seditious; and no man, however guarded in his conduct, was secure against the misinterpretation of his actions, or the malevolence of false, and secret information.

At length the *Sixth Hour*, or noon, arrived ; when every one returned to his home, and partook of a slight and unceremonious dinner, to which guests were very rarely invited. They afterwards retired for a short time to sleep ; a custom which prevails to this day in Italy and Spain, although the early rising, which rendered it in some measure necessary to the Romans, can no longer be pleaded by the middle and higher orders of their descendants.

Previous to the third hour, some trifling refreshment was taken ; but breakfast was not, as with us, a social meal ; it was eaten by each separately, without regard to form, and at no settled hour.

## CHAP. VIII.

Amusements of the Afternoon. — Tennis. — Dancing.  
 —Athletic Sports.—Boxing.—The Circus. — Chariot  
 and Horse Races. — The Gestatio. — Mode of Riding.  
 —Horses.—Carriages.—Porticoes.

THE morning having been thus passed in the different pursuits which engaged each person separately,—in the temples, the palaces, the courts, and public places, or in the more laborious duties of life,—the afternoon was generally devoted to amusement. Some there no doubt were, who, more assiduous than others, continued their labours to a later hour: but they were few; and we may judge how little their example was followed, from the circumstance, that both Horace and Seneca mention the senator Asinius Pollio with particular respect, as one more than ordinarily diligent, because he attended to business until the tenth hour, *four o'clock*; but that time once passed, he would not even open a letter, lest it should occasion him further occupation.

The space between noon and the usual hour for supper was employed, first, as we have

already seen, in taking refreshment and repose, and afterwards, in various kinds of exercise—on foot, on horseback, and in carriages—in active sports, and at the bath.

Amongst the active amusements, Tennis took the lead; not merely as a pastime for youth, but as the relaxation of the gravest, as well as the most distinguished men. Suetonius mentions it, in his life of Augustus, as one of the diversions of that prince; Valerius Maximus relates, that the celebrated Jurist Scævola was in the habit of amusing himself with it after the fatigues of the forum; and Plutarch observes, that the very day on which Cato of Utica lost his election to the dignity of consul, he went as usual to the tennis-court, although such days were usually passed in mourning by the unsuccessful candidates and their friends. Mæcenas is also mentioned as attached to this diversion; Pliny the younger alludes to it with evident satisfaction; and, in short, it was so much in vogue, that few country houses were without a court attached to them for that purpose, and in the city, the public courts were numerous. But the game does not appear to have been played, like modern tennis, with a racquet, instead of which the hand was

furnished with a gauntlet: neither were its rules quite similar.<sup>1</sup>

There were various other games of ball, some of which were played in the manner of our English Fives, and Football; and one—*Harpastum*, which seems to have resembled the common Irish game of Hurling: the players were divided into two sets, equidistant from a line drawn between them, and behind each there was another line which formed the bounds; the ball was placed in the centre, and the contention consisted in forcing it over the boundary line of the opponent.

The great Scipio Africanus amused himself with dancing; “not” as Seneca says, “those effeminate dances which announce voluptuousness and corruption of manners; but those manly, animated dances in use among their ancestors, *which even their enemies might witness without abating their respect!*”<sup>2</sup> It is to be regretted that Seneca was not more precise in his description, as they probably differed ma-

<sup>1</sup> “Tennis.” Sueton. in *Vit. August.*—*Valer. Max.* l. viii. c. 8.—*Plut. in Cat. Min.*—*Horat.* l. i. sat. 5.—*Plin. Epist.* l. v. ep. 6.—Vide Chap. v.

<sup>2</sup> *Seneca de Tranq. An.* c. 15.

terially from the waltz and the quadrille of the present day.

The young men were chiefly engaged in athletic sports, in a large plain by the side of the Tiber, called the *Campus Martius*; or in public schools, severally termed *Gymnasium* and *Palestra*, where they were instructed in riding, driving, and the various military exercises. Boxing, wrestling, and throwing the *Discus*, or quoit, held a prominent share in their amusements; but chariot-driving took the lead before all others.

When boxing took a more serious turn, it became a contest of much greater danger than the modern pugilistic battles. The combatants wore gloves loaded with metal, and the issue of "the fight" was often fatal to one or both of them.

---

"he threw

Two ponderous gauntlets down in open view—  
Gauntlets, which Eryx wont in fight to wield,  
And sheath his hands with, in the listed field.  
With fear and wonder seiz'd, the crowd beholds  
The *gloves of death*, with seven distinguish'd folds  
Of tough bull-hides: the space within is spread  
With iron, or with heavy loads of lead."

*Dryden's Virgil, Æn. v.*

Whether they were as expert as the pugilists of the present day, we have no means of as-

certaining; but it is certain, that the professors of the art were trained with equal regularity; and there can be little doubt of their prowess, as we are told of one of them having had his whole set of teeth knocked down his throat at a single blow!

Both horse and chariot-races, but especially the latter, were favourite diversions of the people in general; and, in order to enjoy them at their ease, there was an enclosed course immediately adjoining the city, called the *Circus*, although, in point of fact, its form was oval. It was rather more than a mile in circumference; was surrounded with seats in the form of an amphitheatre, and three tiers of galleries; and was calculated to contain at least 150,000, or, as some suppose, more than 250,000 spectators. In the centre, there was a wall twelve feet in breadth, and four in height, round which the race was performed, and at one end, there stood a triumphal arch through which the successful charioteer drove amid the plaudits of the assembly. The horses ran to the left, and were restrained by a chain across the goal until the signal was given for starting. The race was generally decided in one heat of five, or sometimes seven times round the course, which, in the latter instance, was a

distance of about four English miles. Four chariots usually started together, the drivers of which were distinguished by dresses of different colours, each of which had its partizans, who betted largely on their favourite : for, it was neither the charioteer, nor his horses, that interested them, but the colour which they adopted ; and so far was this carried, that the people were actually divided into parties who espoused the pretensions of the different liveries with such warmth, that all Rome was at one time agitated with the disputes of the *Green and Red Factions*. The chariots, as they are usually called, were nothing more than uncovered two-wheeled cars, high and circular in front, and open behind. They were usually drawn by three or four horses, abreast, which the driver guided in a standing position, with the reins fastened round his body : a custom which occasioned many serious accidents ; for, the course being narrow, the turnings sharp and frequent, and both crossing and jostling permitted, the carriages were often overturned.\*

\* The "*Circus*," mentioned in the text, was as old as the time of Tarquinius Priscus ; but its original destination was only to celebrate the public games on great festivals. It was called, by way of pre-eminence, *Circus Maximus*.

We have very little information respecting their jockies; and it is not improbable that their horse-races were commonly run, as in modern Italy, without riders. Mention is, indeed, made of matches in which two horses were rode together by one man; and of some in which the riders leaped, during the race, from the horses on which they were mounted to others which they led: but these appear more like feats of horsemanship than trials of speed. These sports were repeated in apparently endless succession, not only at the Circus already described, but at six similar, though smaller, courses in the city, or its immediate vicinity. It might be imagined that such a continued display would have satiated the most craving appetite for diversion: but the eagerness of the multitude, was unabating: the capacious benches of the great circus were ever filled with a still untired crowd of spectators, and its vast area scarcely sufficed to contain the throng that pressed for admission. When the people were deprived by the emperors of their ancient right to choose their own magistrates, they lost the interest they formerly took, with the weight they possessed, in the affairs of the state: vast numbers were wholly without employment, and

those who had no other means of support were provided for at the public expense: thus, masters of their time, and no longer finding occupation in the cabals of the forum, they devoted themselves, with an ardour that partook more of the nature of a mania than of a taste, to the various amusements which the government, no doubt to divert their attention from its measures, provided for the public:—

“ And those who once, with unresisted sway,  
Gave armies, empire, every thing, away,  
For two poor claims had long renounced the whole,  
And only ask’d—the circus and the dole.”

*Gifford's Juvenal*, sat. x.

They who merely took the air on horseback, or in carriages, were accustomed to assemble in an open space used solely for that purpose, called the *Gestatio*: it was laid out in the form of a circus, and there usually was one adjoining the gardens of the villas belonging to persons of fortune.

The Romans rode without stirrups: nor does it appear at what period they were at first used: there is no mention made of them in the classics, nor do they appear on antique statues.

or coins. The young were taught to vault into their seat, and the aged or inactive were either assisted in mounting by their grooms, or used the aid of stepping stones, which were placed at stated distances on the roads. Neither had they saddles, such as ours, but merely cloths folded according to the convenience of the rider, and fastened with a surcingle. These were covered with a large housing which was often richly embroidered; and, as the bridles were generally highly ornamented, the whole caparison wore a splendid appearance. The horses were all entire, and the modern fashions of docking and cropping were not practised. It seems incontestable that they endeavoured, by some means, to secure the hoofs of their horses from injury; but it is equally certain that they were not acquainted with our method of shoeing. We are, indeed, told, that Nero's mules were shod with silver; and frequent allusion is made in the classic authors to iron and brass as having been employed for a similar purpose: but the shoes were not nailed, and were so contrived as to be removed at pleasure. It is also probable, that they came over the hoof, and that all we are to understand by "silver

shoes" is, that the upper part only was formed of that metal.<sup>4</sup>

Of the form of the carriages in use among the Romans we have no certain description. They were of various kinds: a chair, or sedan, called *sella*, and a litter, or couch, both open and covered, on which they reclined, termed *lectica*, were much used in the city, and sometimes also on journeys. These were borne on poles, the former by two, and the latter, by four, or six slaves, in livery. The *lecticæ* are supposed to have been introduced towards the close of the republic, from Asia, where

<sup>4</sup>With respect to "*shoeing horses*," Professor Beckman remarks, with great justice, "that it certainly was a bold attempt to nail a piece of iron, for the first time, under the foot of a horse." After a most diligent investigation of all the authorities that have touched on the subject,—and they are no small number,—he ascribes the period to the ninth century.

"*Saddles*," he supposes to have been in use about the middle of the fourth century. But the first certain account that he has discovered of "*stirrups*," does not occur until the sixth century. It would appear, from some figures on an ancient engraved stone, and drawing, that horse-soldiers were provided with a small step, or a loop of leather, on their lances, to aid them in mounting.

*History of Inventions*, vol. ii.

they are still used under the name of *palanquins*: they were furnished with a mattress and pillows, and had feet to support them when set down; these were frequently of silver, sometimes even of gold, and the whole was most splendidly decorated. There was also a kind of close litter, carried by two mules, which probably resembled a carriage of that description in use at this day in Spain and Portugal,—countries, it may be observed, in which many traces of Roman customs, as well as antiquities, are yet to be found. The litter alluded to, is a double sedan, in the manner of a vis-a-vis, and the mules are placed between the poles, one before, and the other behind: it forms an easy, though slow conveyance, and is chiefly used by ladies and invalids, and in those places where the roads do not admit of carriages on wheels: but the Roman *lectica* was as much employed by men as by females.

They had carriages, both open and covered, on two wheels, and drawn by two or more horses abreast; and four-wheeled cars, or coaches, drawn by four, and sometimes six horses, or mules. These were painted of various colours, and highly ornamented; but the post-carriage, used for travelling, appears to have

had the body of wicker-work, and, in fact, to have been nothing more than a light two-wheeled cart, drawn by three mules.<sup>5</sup> The wheels were made in much the same manner as at present; though, sometimes, they were a

<sup>5</sup> The first establishment in Europe of "*post-carriages*" for travelling is due to the Emperor Augustus. But they were only for the use of the public couriers; and although private persons were sometimes permitted to employ them, it was only in virtue of a royal mandate; but the expense, it should be observed, was defrayed by government. The relays were frequent, and at regular distances throughout every part of the empire. In the reign of Trajan we find Pliny travelling in post-chaises from Ephesus to Pergamum (the ancient Troy), and apologizing to the emperor for having granted to his wife an order for post-horses, from his government in Anatolia to Rome. *Plin. Epist.* l. x. ep. 26. 28. and 121.

Of the celerity with which they travelled, an idea may be formed from the record of a journey made by Cæsarius, a magistrate of rank, in the time of Theodosius, who went post from Antioch to Constantinople. He began his journey at night, was in Cappadocia (165 miles from Antioch) the ensuing evening, and arrived at Constantinople the sixth day about noon: the whole distance being 725 Roman, or 665 English miles.

See Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, vol. i. c. 2.

solid circle of timber, and the tire was not unfrequently of brass; and, so far as we may judge from representations on ancient sculpture and medals, they were cumbrously heavy.

The horses were yoked to the carriage by means of a curved cross-bar, fastened to the pole, and passing over their necks; and were guided, as at present, by bridles and reins, which were sometimes of embroidered silk, with gold bits. The driver sat close behind the pole, and does not appear to have had an elevated seat; but in all other respects he seems to have managed his cattle like a modern coachman.

Besides horses and mules, many other animals,—dogs, goats, deer, and, it is related, even bears, leopards, lions, and tygers, were occasionally used in carriages; but more, it is to be presumed, for show, and to gratify a whimsical taste, than for real service.

Those persons who were not provided with a carriage of their own, might avail themselves of numerous vehicles for hire, with which Rome abounded. But walking was the prevalent exercise; and luxury had introduced such a degree of sensuality into all their actions, that, not content with the natural ad-

vantages of their fine climate, they had long covered promenades, or porticos, where they might enjoy the air without being exposed to the changes of the weather. Many of these were superbly vaulted, supported by massive pillars of marble, paved with mosaic, and ornamented with a profusion of pictures and statues. They form, indeed, so prominent a feature in the portraiture of Roman manners as to merit a separate description.

## CHAP IX.

Introduction of the Fine Arts into Rome.—Rapacity in Forming Collections.—Galleries.—Maxims for Conversation.—Poets.—Chess.—Newspapers.—Porticos.—Private Libraries.—Books.—Epistolary Correspondence.—Mode of Writing.—Public Libraries.

**DURING** nearly the first six centuries of its history, Rome, filled with the spoils of barbarous nations, presented only the martial spectacle of a warlike and conquering people: the fine arts were unknown there until Marcellus, Scipio, Paulus Emilius, Mummius,<sup>1</sup> and others, brought from Syracuse, from Asia, Macedonia, and Corinth, the various specimens which those places afforded; and inspired their countrymen with a taste which they afterwards gratified at the expense of every liberal feeling of public

<sup>1</sup> “*Mummius*” threatened the persons to whom he entrusted the carriage of some antique statues, and rare pictures, taken at Corinth,—“that if they lost those, *they should give him new ones.*”

justice and private right. "The statues and pictures which Marcellus took from Syracuse were, no doubt," says Livy, "the spoils of the enemy, and belonged, by the laws of war, to the conqueror; but it is from that period that we may date the birth of that licentious cupidity which has led the Romans to pillage, without scruple or distinction, both the temples of the gods, and the houses of individuals, in order to appropriate to themselves the chef-d'œuvres of the Greeks, which, until then, they neither understood nor valued."<sup>2</sup>

The least criminal of the means employed in the gratification of this new passion was, to compel the sale, for a trifling consideration, of works in themselves beyond all price: for which species of spoliation, the commands to which men of rank were appointed in foreign countries afforded frequent opportunities. The purity of the ancient laws did not allow the governors of provinces to make purchases from the people over whom they ruled: a wise and salutary regulation of the senate, to prevent a very odious kind of speculation which afterwards dishonored the Roman name, and tar-

<sup>2</sup> *Tit. Liv.* l. xxv. c. 40.

nished the lustre of their conquests: but when their morals became relaxed, neither laws nor principle were longer regarded; and some openly took whatever pleased them, whether public or private property, without pretext or excuse, and without an idea of remuneration; while others, more cautious, or more open to a sense of shame, made plausible excuses for borrowing rare works of art from cities and private persons, without any intention of returning them. It is difficult to credit what Cicero relates of the excesses of Verres in this particular during his prætorship in Sicily: he charges him with having plundered the temples and palaces of all they contained, that was most precious, in bronzes, marbles, pictures, and statues.\* Nor were the generality of governors far behind him in this disgusting extortion; and their galleries were filled with the splendid testimonials of their rapacity. The porticos to which allusion has been already made, must not be confounded with those which merely formed a screen before the entrance to private houses, or even public buildings; for, although they might be appendant to them, yet

\* *Cicero. Orat. in Verrem.*

they were in fact separate edifices, intended solely for exercise in all weather, and were frequently of vast extent. These were sometimes closed, in the manner of galleries, and so constructed as to be adapted to every season, ranges of windows being exposed to different aspects, so as to admit either the sun in winter, or the air in summer. Such galleries were termed *Crypto-Porticus*, in contradistinction to the open piazza, or *Porticus*, over which they were sometimes constructed: the mansions of the opulent were in general encircled by them, as well as the piazza.

Cicero constructed galleries at his villa, at Tusculum, in imitation of the schools of Athens: they were ornamented with the finest statues and paintings of Greece, and were appropriated to philosophical discussions, and familiar discourse with his friends. Of these conversations he has left an account which shows the degree of refinement in manners, as well as morals, at which the Romans had then arrived. "They generally turn," says he, "on our private affairs, or those of the state, or else on some literary subject, without carrying the discussion of any one topic so far as to tire

those whose taste it may not suit. Attention is paid to treat each subject with the proper degree of seriousness or levity, which its importance may require, or its trifling nature permit: but, above all, care is taken never to make an observation which may betray a defect in the moral character; of which there is not a greater mark than the too common habit of ridiculing, or speaking to the disadvantage of the absent. Our language, indeed, should ever be free from heat, as our observations from prejudice, malevolence, or frivolity; it should always be accompanied by affability of manner, and respect for those to whom it is addressed; and we should studiously avoid speaking of ourselves, but more especially in our own commendation.<sup>4</sup>” These maxims were carefully observed by all well-bred persons; and particular regard appears to have been had to preserve the decorum and respect due to age, and to the fair sex, and the circumspection necessary in the presence of youth. Not but they were sometimes infringed upon: gross and immoral persons will occasionally be found in

<sup>4</sup> *Cic. de Offic. l. i. c. 37, 38.*

every society; but then, as now, though they might be tolerated, they were not respected.

The galleries were chiefly devoted to sedentary amusements, among which the game of chess, or one nearly resembling it, appears to have had a principal share.<sup>5</sup> Neither were they without the resource of a daily newspaper, which recorded the chief occurrences of public

<sup>5</sup> “*Chess*” is known to be a game of great antiquity; and the allusions to it in classic authors leave little doubt of its having been played by the Romans in much the same manner as now : —

“ To mimic war the radiant troops are led,  
And martial ranks the varied table spread ;  
There sable bands, and here a snow-white train,  
With doubtful fate of war the fight maintain.  
But, who with thee shall dare dispute the field ?  
Led by thy hand, what warrior knows to yield ?  
Or if he fall, he falls with glorious pride,  
His vanquish'd foe extended by his side.  
Unnumber'd stratagems thy forces try ;  
Now artful feign, and only feign, to fly :  
Now boldly rushes through the ranks of war  
The chief, who view'd the slaughtering scene from far.  
This bravely daring in the arduous toil,  
Repels the host advancing to the spoil ;  
While cautious, that moves dreadful on, and slow,  
And fraudulent, meditates the certain blow.

*Lucan. Poem addressed to Piso.*

note and general interest, with the more private intelligence of births, deaths, marriages, and fashionable arrivals, in much the same manner as those of more modern date. It was not, indeed, issued for circulation, being merely hung up in some place of usual resort, and published, under the sanction of the government, for general information; but we may presume that it was copied for the private accommodation of the wealthy. Poets not unfrequently took advantage of the indolent leisure that reigned in these places to recite the efforts of their muse, and sometimes, it would appear, to tire the patience of their auditors:—

“ While sweetly floats the voice in echoes round,  
The cockcombs never think at whose expence  
They thus indulge the dear impertinence.”

*Francis's Hor. b. i. sat. 4.*

Literary men, indeed, read aloud for exercise: the younger Pliny gravely tells us, that it assisted his digestion; and the celebrated physician, Celsus, recommends it for the same purpose.

The porticoes annexed to the temples, and other public edifices, seem to have formed

spacious squares, either in front of, or enclosing them; and in many instances they were entirely detached, and of such extent, that they were used not only for exercise on foot, but in carriages also. The Campus Martius was surrounded by one continued colonnade; and many entire quarters of the city afforded similar shelter. These were made use of by dealers in pictures, statues, and other precious commodities, for the exposition of their wares; and, occasionally, even the senate and the tribunals assembled in them, to ratify their acts, and to administer justice, or to give audience to ambassadors. They were multiplied under the emperors; each endeavouring to surpass the other in this species of magnificence. The portico erected by Augustus around the temple of Apollo was supported by columns of porphyry, and contained the statues of the fifty Danaides, with a large collection of pictures by the most celebrated masters. Agrippa adorned that which he consecrated to Neptune, in acknowledgement for his naval victories, with the story of the Argonauts; and those of Nero, and his successors, had each their appropriate and splendid embellishments: while

in the more simple time of the republic, they were merely adorned with the spoils of the enemy.

Some affluent patricians, who patronized literature, had, attached to their galleries, splendid libraries, which were open to the inspection of the learned and the curious. Among these, that of Lucullus was remarkable, not only for the number and variety of the books, and specimens of art, but for the liberal use to which it was devoted. It was open, like many others, to the public, but was particularly resorted to by learned foreigners, who were there sure to meet the most flattering reception. Lucullus himself took frequent part in their discussions; he protected them, received them at his table, and assisted them in their affairs; so that his house, as we are informed by Plutarch, became the asylum of literature, and the Prytaneum<sup>6</sup> of the most eminent Greeks who visited Rome.

These collections were the more precious in consequence of the difficulty in acquiring

<sup>6</sup>The "*Prytaneum*" was a palace at Athens where the 50 presidents of the senate lived at the public expense.

books at a period when, the art of printing being unknown, each copy was, necessarily, transcribed. They were sometimes written on parchment, but more generally on a paper made from the leaves of a plant called *Papyrus*, which grew, and was prepared, in Egypt. The leaves were pasted together at the ends, and then made up into a roll, which was enclosed in a covering of skin, or silk, fastened with strings, or clasps, and an ornament in the form of a ball, and inscribed with the title. From this manner of rolling they acquired the name of *Volumen*, which has descended to our books of the present day, although their form no longer justifies its application. Both the papyrus and parchment were as often used of various colours, as white: mention is indeed made of purple vellum, and gilt letters; and such was the elegance usually displayed in the ornaments, that the clasps and rollers were frequently of silver or gold.

The copyists were usually slaves who had received a liberal education; and their great number gives room to suppose, that, however tedious the process of transcription, the expense was not considerable. The booksellers' shops were in consequence both numerous and

well furnished with manuscripts. But inaccuracies must have been frequent; and thus, probably, have arisen those perplexing and irreconcilable passages, which sometimes occur in those copies that have reached us.

The method of rolling the paper was adopted even in epistolary correspondence, until Cæsar introduced the custom of folding letters in a flat, square form; but they were then divided into small pages in the manner of a modern book. When forwarded for delivery, they were tied round with a silken thread, the ends of which were sealed with wax;<sup>7</sup> which mode of closing them was in use, even in this country, at no very remote period: *petit-mâîtres* did not omit to perfume them. The Romans did not use to subscribe their letters, but inserted their own name and that of the person to whom they were addressed, at the commencement, thus: *Julius Cæsar to his friend Mark Antony*,

<sup>7</sup> Besides "*wax*," the ancients are supposed to have sealed their letters with a cement partly composed of chalk, or fuller's-earth; but of the composition of which we are wholly ignorant. The sealing-wax used at present is a modern invention. See *Beckmann's History of Inventions*, vol. i. art. *Sealing-wax*.

h! And instead of the complimentary lusion dictated by modern politeness, they d them with a simple—farewell! They ar to have been adepts in the art of steno- hy, and were acquainted with the use of ers to secure the secrecy of confidential espondence.

riting was performed with a reed, split pointed like our pens,<sup>8</sup> and dipped in ink, li was sometimes composed of a black d emitted by the cuttle-fish. But memo- a, or other unimportant matter not intended e preserved, were usually written on tablets ad with wax. This was effected by means metal pencil, called *stylus*, pointed at one

‘Pens.’ It is extraordinary that botanists have yet been able to determine the class of reeds de- ted by the Romans under the name of *Calamus*, sh was that applied to the plant used by them in ing: more especially as reeds are still employed for same purpose throughout the East, and have been cularly described by various travellers. (See *Voyages hardin*, vol. v. p. 49.—Do. *Tournefort*, vol. ii p. 136.) time when quills were first used is uncertain, but is led by Prof. Beckmann to the middle of the seventh ury. *History of Inventions*, vol. ii. art. *Writing* s,

end, to scrape the letters, and flat at the other, to smooth the wax, when any correction was necessary. It appears to have admitted of considerable facility of execution; and the same method is still employed, though for a different purpose, by engravers in aqua-tinta.

Besides the private libraries that were open to general use, there were others that were entirely public property. The first so established, was founded by Asinius Pollio, in the temple of liberty. It was embellished with the statues of the most celebrated scientific personages of antiquity, and Varro was the only living author, among the great number who then flourished at Rome, to whom that honor was assigned: a more glorious distinction, as Pliny justly observes,<sup>9</sup> than the naval crown which he received from Pompey for his services in the war against the pirates. Pollio lived in the Augustan age, and had gained the honor of a triumph; but the variety of talents by which he was distinguished gave him a juster title to be ranked among the illustrious men of that celebrated period; and the glory which he acquired by being the first to found a library for

<sup>9</sup> *Plin. Hist. Nat.* l. vii. c. 30.

the use of the public, animated even the emperors to follow his example. They afterwards became numerous, and were generally attached to some temple; were surrounded by vast porticos; and constructed not only for the reception of large collections of books, but also for the accommodation of the numerous assemblages of literati by whom they were frequented. Augustus erected one into an academy where new productions in poetry were submitted to censorship, and in which those deemed worthy of being transmitted to posterity were deposited, accompanied with the portrait of the author. Augustus, indeed, used every means for the encouragement of the arts and sciences, and they flourished under his protection to a degree which has distinguished his reign as the standard epoch of taste. There were, at that time, three of those libraries at Rome, and their number was augmented by succeeding emperors to twenty-nine: of all these, the most considerable, as well the most celebrated, were the *Palatine* and the *Ulpian*; the former so called from its situation, and the latter from its founder, the Emperor Ulpus Trajan.

From this slight description some idea may

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be formed of the extent and magnificence of the Roman galleries, and libraries; but an enumeration of the various details which have been transmitted in the classic authors would far exceed the limits to which these sketches are confined.<sup>10</sup>

A period was put to the several occupations of which we have already treated, towards the ninth hour, or about three o'clock, when the opening of the public baths was announced by the sound of a bell; at which well known signal, both business and amusement ceased, and all ranks hastened to partake of the enjoyment to which they were, without distinction, summoned.

<sup>10</sup> “ *Galleries and Libraries.*” The English reader will find ample information on this subject in *Kennett's Rom. Antiquities*—*Castell's Villas of the Ancients*—and *Melmoth's Pliny*.

## CHAP. X.

Aqueducts.—Baths.—Public Thermæ.—Baths of Nero, of Dioclesian, and of Caracalla.—Libraries.—Attendants.—Mode of Bathing.—Private Baths.

THE custom of daily bathing has been abandoned in Italy for many ages past, the use of linen having rendered it in a great measure unnecessary. But as the Romans were long unacquainted with that luxury, and the covering for their feet was very imperfect, frequent ablution was necessary both for health, and cleanliness; and, from constant habit, it became requisite to their personal comfort, and one of their chief sources of enjoyment. A citizen, of whatever class, therefore, seldom failed in his attendance on the bath, unless public or private mourning obliged him to abstain from it.

In the rude ages of the republic, when the mass of the people were chiefly engaged in agriculture, and the toils of the field were only interrupted by an occasional festival, it was merely customary to wash the arms and legs

in the evening, on the cessation of labour ; and every ninth day, when the assemblies held for the affairs of government, or the usual attendance on the markets, called them to the city, they bathed the whole body : but they consulted no other rules than those which mere cleanliness dictated, and the nearest stream was usually considered the most convenient bath.

It was not until about the year 441 from its foundation that Rome was supplied with water by means of aqueducts ; but, at a later period, they became so numerous, that they are supposed to have furnished the city with a quantity equal to 500,000 hogsheads every twenty-four hours. They were constructed of brick, and conveyed the water, from distances of thirty, forty, and even of sixty, miles, to reservoirs ; whence it was distributed over the town through metal pipes.<sup>1</sup> That attention to ornament, as well as use, by which the public buildings of the Romans were distinguished, was displayed in

<sup>1</sup> “ *Aqueducts.*” Strabo says, “ that such a quantity of water was introduced into the city, that whole rivers seemed to flow through the streets and sewers ; so that every house had its pipes and cisterns sufficient to furnish a copious and perpetual supply.”

“ Three only (out of nine), of the ancient aqueducts

their erection: the Julian aqueduct, built by Agrippa, when *Ædile* under Augustus, contained 190 reservoirs, and 500 fountains, all embellished with columns and statuary; and the vestiges of others, remaining at this day, attest their former beauty and convenience. Works of such magnitude and utility merited, and received, the especial care of government: accordingly, Augustus established a commission for their superintendence, of which the celebrated orator Messala was president, and from that time the situation was always held by men of the first rank.

The establishment of baths followed soon after that of aqueducts; but they were for a long time of extremely simple construction, and merely supplied with cold water. At first they were only erected contiguous to the *Gymnasia* and *Palestræ*, where the nature of the exercises rendered their use indispensable; this led to their general adoption, and they were finally carried to a degree of perfection which remain to supply modern Rome; and yet, such is the quantity they convey, and so pure the sources whence they derive it, that no city can boast of such a profuse supply of clear and salubrious water."

*Eustace's Class. Tour*, vol. ii,

converted an act of mere cleanliness into a refinement of luxury.

It has been supposed, that the various warm springs which abound in the neighbourhood of Rome, first inspired its inhabitants with the idea of hot-baths, for which purpose a variety of vessels were in use in private houses. But public establishments of that kind were derived from the nations of the East; were first adopted in Greece; and thence passed into Italy, where they are said to have been introduced by Mæcenas, a short time previous to the commencement of the Christian Æra. Being then joined to the cold-baths, they obtained the denomination of *Thermes*, and began to assume that splendor which has since excited the astonishment of the world, and the accounts of which would have exceeded our belief, were they not too well authenticated to be doubted, and confirmed by existing remains. Roman magnificence seems, indeed, to have particularly displayed itself in the baths: they contained within their enclosure, not alone the usual conveniences for bathing, but also, spacious galleries, and porticos of vast extent, for recreation and exercise, with a prodigious number of apartments for dressing and repose;

and some had extensive gardens attached, embracing all the variety of running water, lawns, terraces, groves, and even woods. The most considerable were, those of Agrippa :—of Nero ; to which the waters of the sea, and of the sulphurous fountain of Albula, now *Tivoli*, were conducted :—of Caracalla ; ornamented with 200 pillars, and furnished with 1600 seats of marble :—and of Dioclesian ; which surpassed all others in size and sumptuousness of decoration, and was, besides, enriched with the precious collection of the Ulpian library. We are told, that Dioclesian employed forty thousand Christian soldiers in its construction, whom he first degraded with ignominy, and afterwards massacred when the edifice was completed ;<sup>2</sup> and it is not a little remarkable, that its remains, which, after a lapse of fifteen centuries, are still in great preservation, should now serve as a monastery.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> *Baronius, Annal. vol. ii.*

<sup>3</sup> “ *Baths of Dioclesian.* ” “ On an elevated site near the Viminal and Quirinal hills, stands one of the grandest remains of ancient splendor—a considerable portion of the baths of Dioclesian, now converted into a convent of Carthusians. The principal hall is the church, and though four of the side recesses are filled up,

The public *Thermæ* generally consisted of a long uniform range of buildings exposed to a southern aspect. The north front contained a reservoir of cold water, sufficiently large to admit of swimming in it; the centre was occupied by a spacious vestibule; and on each side was a suite of warm, cold, and vapour baths; with their appendant apartments for cooling, dressing, and refreshment. The original intention in thus constructing them was, that each wing should be appropriated to the different sexes. It was, then, not even thought decorous for a father to bathe with his son; after the latter had attained the age of puberty: but this reserve soon wore off, and, notwithstanding various prohibitory decrees of succeeding emperors, the baths were indiscrimin-

and the two middle ones somewhat altered; though its pavement has been raised to remove dampness, and of course its proportions have been altered, yet it retains its length, its pillars, its cross-ribbed vault, and much of its original grandeur. It is supported by eight pillars, 40 feet in height, and five in diameter. The raising of the pavement, by taking six feet from the height of these pillars has destroyed their proportion, and given them a very massive appearance. The length of the hall is 350 feet, its breadth 80, and its height 76."

*Eustace's Class. Tour*, vol. i,

ately used by both males and females; with this only distinction, that the latter were attended by women.<sup>4</sup> These baths were so many spacious and magnificent rooms; but that containing the warm-bath was double the size of the others, both because of the greater concourse of persons by whom it was frequented, and the additional time which they remained. The roofs were vaulted, and supported by pillars; the pavement was either tessellated or mosaic; the walls were encrusted with marble, and embellished with master-pieces of painting and sculpture; and the galleries, the porticos, and the various private apartments, were all ornamented with equal profusion. The vases and utensils were in unison with this magnificence: the warm-baths, for separate use, were either of marble, of oriental granite, or of porphyry; and some were occasionally suspended, in order that their undulatory motion should at once procure a refreshing change of air, and invite repose. The thermes of Caracalla was 1840 feet in length, and upwards of 1400 in breadth, and contained within its walls

<sup>4</sup> “*Attended by women.*” Some authors, however, deprive the ladies of even this claim to delicacy.

the temples of Apollo, of Æsculapius, of Bacchus, and of Hercules. Besides the usual apartments, and the vast hall, already mentioned, it contained two extensive libraries, and a saloon for music; along the entire front there was a gymnasium for exercise; and the whole extent of the spacious gardens was encircled by a lofty portico opening into halls for the recitation of poetry, and the delivery of philosophical lectures.

Numerous slaves were employed in these public thermæ, in the various departments of heating and cleansing the baths, and attendance on the bathers. Each bore the distinctive appellation of his particular employment, and all were under the superintendence of certain officers of the police; whose duty it also was, to take care that order and decorum were preserved, and to regulate the time and price of bathing according to the directions of the magistrates. The hours at which they were open were, at first, between two and three in the afternoon; afterwards, between sun-rise and sun-set; and finally, in the reign of Alexander Severus, the people were allowed access to them in the night, during the violent summer heats; but at all other times, the sick and in-

firm alone were indulged with that permission. The price of admission amounted to no more than about a farthing of our money; for there were in general large funds appropriated to them, and some were wholly supported at the expence of the state. The public were admitted to them all, without distinction of rank, and even the Emperors themselves not unfrequently condescended to join the throng, and bathed indiscriminately with their subjects.

The bathing commenced with warm, and ended with cold, water; the vapour-bath being only occasionally used. The operation lasted a considerable time; for, not content with merely cleansing and drying the skin, the Romans were accustomed to have their bodies scraped with a small instrument of ivory or metal, of a semicircular form, rounded at the extreme edge, with a groove through which the impurities of the skin might run off.

The private houses of persons of rank, and more especially their villas, usually had baths attached to them, many of which vied in splendor, though not in extent, with the public thermæ. We are indebted to Seneca for a description of one of these, from which we may picture to ourselves the general grandeur of

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their construction. According to his account, the walls were of Alexandrian marble, the veins of which were so disposed as to wear the semblance of a regular picture; the basins were set round with a most valuable kind of stone imported from the Grecian Islands; the water was conveyed through silver pipes, and fell, by several descents, in beautiful cascades; the floors were inlaid with precious gems; and an intermixture of statues and colonnades contributed to throw an air of elegance and grandeur over the whole.<sup>6</sup>

On leaving the bath they were anointed with scented oils, and went immediately to supper.

<sup>6</sup> *Senec. Ep. 86.*

## CHAP. XI.

Frugality of diet in the early ages of the Republic.—  
 Simple construction of the Houses and Furniture.—  
 Progress of refinement.—Supper Rooms.—Tables.—  
 Couches.—Supper dress.—Arrangement of the Com-  
 pany.—Guests.—Parasites.—Plate.—Napkins.—Gods  
 of the Table.—Religious Ceremonies.—King of the  
 Feast.—Servants.—Ornamental Furniture.

IF we remount to the early ages of the domestic history of the Romans, we shall find, that their diet consisted chiefly of milk and vegetables, with a coarse kind of pudding which served them in lieu of bread; it was composed of flour and water with the occasional addition of an egg, and is still in common use among the Italian peasantry under the name of *polenta*. They rarely indulged in meat, and wine was almost unknown to them. The ancient Romans, indeed, carried their dislike of luxury so far, that they expelled epicures from among them. Nor were they singular in this practice: the Spartans had their *Ephori*, magistrates, part

of whose duty it was to take care that there should be no intemperate persons in the city : he who became fat through gluttony and idleness was publicly beaten, and they who practised any other than the most simple art of cookery were banished.

The construction of their houses and furniture accorded in plainness with this frugality of diet. But the pristine simplicity of Roman manners yielded gradually to the foreign habits introduced by the conquests of the republic: Greece furnished models of taste in the fine arts, and Asia all the refinements of sensual indulgence ; while the vast increase of wealth, the consequent progress of civilization, and the prodigious population of Rome itself, all contributed to the innovation ; and luxury, at length, reached a pitch of lavish magnificence, which, although it excites our wonder, yet conveys an idea rather of barbarous splendor, and profligate profusion, than of the refined enjoyments of polished society.

After the early period to which we have alluded, when luxury began to gain ground in Rome, but before it had arrived at the degree which it afterwards attained, each house contained one spacious hall in which the family as-

sembled, and which served for all the purposes of society; but, towards the close of the Republic, various apartments were constructed for the reception and entertainment of company, and, in the time of the emperors, their decoration was carried to its highest point of perfection. Amongst these, the eating-rooms—which more immediately claim our attention—were not the least remarkable for their grandeur: they were usually double their breadth in length, and were placed in the upper part of the house, for the enjoyment of the prospect which that situation generally afforded. Nero had saloons, in the golden palace, wainscotted with ivory, the pannels of which turned on pivots, and showered down flowers and perfumes on the guests from reservoirs behind them. The most splendid of these apartments was circular; and its vaulted roof was so constructed as to imitate the movement of the spheres, which represented a different season of the year as each course was placed upon the table. The supper-rooms of Heliogabalus were hung with cloth of gold and silver enriched with jewelry; the frames of the couches were of massive silver, with mattresses covered with the richest embroidery; and the tables, and table-services, were of pure gold.

These, it is true, are instances of regal magnificence, but others were not wanting in the houses of private persons, which rivalled them in the elegance, and even the costliness, of their furniture:—

“ Where ivory couches overspread  
With Tyrian carpets, glowing, fed  
The dazzled eye.”

*Francis's Hor. b. ii. sat. 6.*

The tables were originally made of ordinary wood, square, and on four feet; but the form was afterwards changed to circular, or oval, supported on a single carved pedestal, and they were richly inlaid with ivory, gold, or silver, sometimes with the addition of precious stones. Those most valued were made of a kind of wood with which we are at present unacquainted. It appears to have been brought from some part of Barbary, and was called *citron-wood*: but the timber from the tree of that name is far from beautiful, and certainly was not then so scarce as to command an extraordinary price; yet we are told of a single table, formed of it, having cost a million of sesterces! They were at first used without any covering, and it was not until the reign of the emperors that cloths were

introduced: these were of coloured woollen, or silk and wool intermixed, and variously ornamented with embroidery; but those most in fashion were striped with gold and purple. A canopy was suspended over the table, to guard it, as it is said, from the dirt of the ceiling. This, however it may have added to the decoration of the apartments, does not convey a very high idea of their cleanliness; and, in fact, Horace describes the accidental fall of the drape, at an entertainment, as having enveloped the company in a cloud of dust.<sup>1</sup>

In the time of their ancient poverty, the Romans were content to take their frugal meal seated on a bare bench; but they afterwards adopted the custom of lying down, at supper, on couches somewhat similar to the modern sofa. At first, the ladies did not deem this fashion decorous, and they long adhered to the

<sup>1</sup> "Canopy." Hor. Sat. lib. ii. sat. 8.—There is an anecdote in the life of Heliogabalus—(or more properly *Elagabalus*)—which forms no unapt commentary on the text. Among the various acts of folly committed by that weak prince, he ordered, that all the spiders and mice in Rome should be collected; and the quantity actually gathered, of the former, amounted to 10,000 lb. weight: the mice being rather more difficult of access, only 11,000 were caught.

ancient mode, as more becoming the modesty of the sex ; but from the period of the first Cæsars, to about the year 320, they conformed to the practice of the men. This indulgence, however, was not extended to young people, of either sex, and, when they were admitted at table, they were seated at the feet of their nearest relation. Each couch could accommodate three or four, but seldom five, persons, who laid in a reclining posture, on the left arm, having the shoulders elevated with cushions, and the limbs extended behind whoever was next ; so that, the head of the one was opposite to the breast of the other ; and, in serving themselves, they only made use of the right hand. This mode of placing themselves is supposed to have been derived from the Asiatics, or the Carthaginians : but, perhaps, a better reason than that of mere imitation may be found in the custom of using the warm-bath immediately previous to their principal meal, at which alone they laid down ; for, however refreshing, and even invigorating, it may eventually prove, it occasions a lassitude, at the moment, which demands repose, whence, probably, the recumbent position was adopted. That of sitting, at supper, became afterwards a sign of mourning ; in allusion to which Plutarch

tells us, that, after the defeat of Pompey, Cato never laid himself down—but to sleep.

The couches were usually ranged on three sides only of the table, the other remaining vacant for the more convenient attendance of the servants; but when the form of the table was changed from square to circular, it became customary to place but one large couch around it, in the manner of a crescent. The improvement in the decoration of the table, was followed, as may be supposed, by that of the couch; and from having been formed of the coarsest materials—stuffed with straw, and covered with skins—it became not uncommon to see them plated with silver, and furnished with mattresses of the softest down covered with the richest stuffs. The ancient poets, and even graver writers, are full of descriptions of them, and have long dissertations on their substance and fashion, the choice of the purple, and the perfection of the brocade.

The dress worn at table differed from that in use on other occasions, and consisted merely of a loose robe, of a light texture, and generally white. Cicero accuses Valerius, as if it were a crime, of having appeared at an entertainment, dressed in black, although it was on the occasion of a funeral; and compares

him to a fury whose presence spread dismay among the assembly. The guests were sometimes supplied with these robes by the master of the house. The sandals were taken off, lest they should soil the costly cushions, and the feet were covered with slippers, or, not unfrequently, left naked. Water was presented to the company to wash the hands, and even the feet, before they laid down; and they were then perfumed with essences.<sup>2</sup> It was also customary to sprinkle the apartments with scented waters: but these were, probably, far inferior both in odour and variety, to those of the present day, as the ancients neither possessed so many species of flowers as the moderns, nor were so well acquainted with the art of distilling them; and their chief perfume was always extracted from saffron.

Precedence was strictly attended to, and, in families of distinction, there was always a master of the ceremonies who arranged the com-

<sup>2</sup> “*Perfumed with essences.*” This custom is mentioned in the New Testament, in *Luke* vii. 37 and 38, and *John* xii. 2. Allusion is also made to the supper-dress, in *Matt.* xxii. 12, and to the mode of reclining at supper, in *John* xiii. 23.

pany, but in those of inferior condition, that duty devolved on the giver of the entertainment. The master of the house occupied the second place on the centre couch, that immediately below him being for his wife, and that above, for the most distinguished guest. This was called the consular seat, and we are told, that it was so termed in consequence of being considered the most proper for the chief magistrate, because the space between it and the next couch would admit of his more easily conversing with those who might come to him on the public business. Those next in rank took the upper couch. Guests were allowed to bring their friends, though uninvited, along with them, and they were frequently accompanied by some humble dependants, who, however, do not seem to have been treated with much respect, and were even distinguished by the sneering appellation of "shadows." These, with the parasites of the family—also contemptuously nick-named "flies," from those insects intruding themselves every where,—and the clients, were placed on the lower couch. The custom of entertaining parasites—men who professedly repaid the hospitality of their host with the grossest adulation—was general,

and betrays a want of delicacy and refinement but little in unison with the elevation of sentiment and dignity of manners which we are taught to consider as characteristic of the Romans, as well as a humiliating contrast with the high-minded independence of their ancestors :—

“ Admitted as an humble guest,  
Where men of money break their jest,  
He waits the nod with awe profound,  
And catches, ere it reach the ground,  
The falling joke, and echoes back the sound.”

*Francis's Horace, b. i. ep. 18.*

They were not alone looked upon with the contempt which their servility perhaps merited, but they were often treated with a degree of coarseness that reflected as little credit on the manners, as on the hospitality of their entertainers; and we should find it difficult to determine whether most to despise, the meanness of the patron who could impose, or that of the sycophants who would submit to, such a tax upon their reception.<sup>3</sup>

3 “ *Parasites.*” Amongst many practical jokes played off on this unhappy tribe, there was one with which Heliogabalus sometimes amused himself, that may admit of excuse. He received them in his most splendid ban-

The guests being placed, a bill of fare was laid before each, with a cover and goblet.

So long as the Romans were satisfied with the mere necessities of life, their table services were only of earthen-ware, or wood. The use of plate was deemed so inconsistent with the simplicity of republican manners, that, so late as the year 477 of the commonwealth, P. Corn. Rufinus was expelled the senate because he possessed about ten pounds weight in silver; although he had been twice consul, and once dictator, in which situations it may be presumed that he would have been indulged in the greatest admissible latitude of pomp. At a later period, plate became so general, notwithstanding various sumptuary laws prohibiting its use, that it was as common as it had been previously rare, and, in the time of the emperors, it was frequently of gold. Crassus is said to have pos-

queting-room, and there was placed before them, to all appearance, a supper consisting of every delicacy in season. But, alas! the meat was painted wood, the fruit was wax, and instead of wine, the vases contained only coloured water. Still the courses were served in regular succession; the emperor pressed them to do honor to the entertainment; and after going through all the forms of a sumptuous feast, they were dismissed supperless.

sessed some of which the workmanship alone cost about fifty-two shillings the ounce: Sylla had silver dishes of sixteen hundred ounces; and one Drusianus Rotundus, a freedman of the Emperor Claudius, had one that weighed five hundred pounds, which was the centre dish of eight others, each weighing fifty pounds. Others, though not quite so extravagant with regard to the size, were equally profuse in the abundance and value of their plate, and, in general, their sideboards were loaded with a sumptuous display of massive vessels of the most costly description.

Amidst all this ostentation, a custom of singular meanness prevailed:—each guest provided his own napkin; it was carried by a slave, whose duty it also was to bring it back; but it seldom returned empty; it generally contained a portion of the supper, and it was even customary for the guests to send some part of it to their families during the entertainment. This was not discontinued until long after the reign of Augustus, when it at length became the fashion for the master of the house to furnish his company with napkins, and their paltry perquisite was abolished.

Small figures of Mercury, Hercules, and the penates, were placed upon the table,—of which they were deemed the presiding genii,—and a small quantity of wine was poured upon the board at the commencement and at the end of the repast, as a libation in honor of them, accompanied by a prayer: it was a custom derived from the remotest antiquity, and was ever scrupulously adhered to with pious reverence. The salt was placed beside them, and was looked upon as a thing sacred; if forgotten, or spilled, the table was considered as profaned, and it was supposed to portend some dire misfortune. This superstition was derived from the Greeks, as well as that of viewing it as a bad omen to be thirteen in company: they have, indeed, descended to more modern times, and are not even yet entirely exploded. The table itself was held in veneration, as being sanctified by the presence of their gods, and devoted to the rites of hospitality, and the cultivation of friendship: were a solemn asseveration made, they touched it with the same reverence as if it were an altar, and an act of violence committed there would have been punished as a sacrilege. This religious respect, these libations and prayers,

were so many public protestations by which the pagans avowed their obligation to the divinity for the benefits they enjoyed: what a reproach to the more enlightened Christians of the present age, who, regardless of the observances of their ancestors, and the precepts of their religion, now so generally omit to consecrate their meals by any act of acknowledgment to the Deity.

Grace being ended, the king of the feast was appointed. He was generally elected by lot, but sometimes by acclamation.<sup>4</sup> His functions much resembled those of the president of a convivial club: he alone regulated the festivities of the table; called upon whom he pleased to sing, to tell his story, or to amuse the company by any other talent he might possess; announced the quantity of wine to be drank to each health, or toast; decreed the forfeitures of non-compliance; and enforced his authority under penalty of additional bum-

\* "*King of the feast.*" It is to this custom that Horace alludes, when he says:—

"No more the dice shall there assign  
To thee the jovial monarchy of wine."

*Francis, b. i. od. 4.*

pers. Plutarch has a long dissertation on the qualities which this arbitrary sovereign ought to possess : even Cato the Censor acknowledged that, old as he was, he was delighted at being of those convivial parties where the king of the feast animated each of the company to contribute his share to the general hilarity; and the importance attached by some of the gravest personages to the exercise of his jovial duties, very forcibly depicts the attachment of the Romans to social enjoyment.

At great entertainments, the supper-room was hung with garlands of flowers, and the guests, and servants, were crowned with chaplets.

The slaves in attendance were numerous, and employed in separate services : those whose immediate place it was to wait at the table, were lightly clad, and girt with napkins ; some were stationed at the side-board in charge of the wine and plate ; others were appointed to remove the courses ; and others again to ventilate the apartment with large fans of feathers. But the important personage of all was the carver, whose duty was, not merely the dissection of the joints, but their distribution also ; which required no small share of discrimination, as

the guests were treated according to their rank, and those on the lower couches did not always partake of the dainties served at the upper seats. A distinction was even made between them in the quality of the wine, the best sorts of which were seldom allowed to reach the lower end of the table. The liberal and elegant Pliny the younger, indeed, reprobates this practice, very properly terming it "an alliance of luxury with sordidness;" and Juvenal severely satirises it.<sup>5</sup> We may therefore conclude, that the custom was not without its exceptions: but they who sacrifice largely to ostentation, seldom reserve much to bestow in real liberality, and it is not the less certain that it was the prevailing mode of treating the inferior guests.

Amongst all their refinements to promote indulgence, it never occurred to the wealthy citizens of Rome to apply the bell to the obvious purpose of summoning their servants, and the mode they usually adopted to require their attendance was, the inelegant one of snapping their fingers. The use of forks was also entirely unknown to them; and it has

<sup>5</sup> *Plin. Epist.* l. ii. ep. 6—*Juvenal, sat. v.*

even been questioned, whether the guests at supper made use of knives, or did not wholly rely upon the assistance of the carver.<sup>6</sup>

Besides the ornaments of the dining-room, already mentioned, we read of "Tyrian carpets," "Persian arras," and "silken draperies," with which the floors, the walls, and windows, of their saloons were covered. The floors, however, were generally bare, though richly tessellated; the ceilings were frequently adorned with a fret-work of gold and ivory; the walls were usually painted in fresco, or encrusted with sculptured marble; and both paintings and statuary were lavished with profusion even in the houses of persons of inferior rank. Scented oil was used for illuminating the

<sup>6</sup> "*Forks.*" Professor Beckmann (*Hist. of Inven.* vol. iv. art. *Forks*) attributes the first use of forks to the Italians, about the end of the fifteenth century. Perhaps the oldest instrument of this kind is that formerly used by Henry the Fourth of France, which is still preserved at the castle of Pau: it is of steel, two pronged, and of both length and strength sufficient to secure a baron of beef. It is remarkable, that they are mentioned as a novelty, so late as the year 1608, by the celebrated English traveller, Coryat. *Crudities*, p. 99, edit. 1776.

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apartments; and ample carved lamps, each resting on a massive candelabrum of figured bronze,<sup>7</sup> reflected their brilliancy on a gorgeous display of surrounding magnificence:—

“ Now purple hangings clothe the palace walls,  
And sumptuous feasts are made in splendid halls.  
On Tyrian carpets, richly wrought, they dine ;  
With loads of massy plate, the side-boards shine,  
And antique vases, all of gold emboss'd,  
—The gold itself inferior to the cost  
Of curious work.”

*Dryden's Virgil, Æn. b. i.*

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“ *Bronze.*” Whether this was the substance which the Romans distinguished by the name of “ *Corinthian brass*,” is not certain: whatever that metal was, it was rare and greatly prized: the younger Pliny mentions that his friend Spurrinna possessed a table-service of it, which he valued highly *as a curiosity*.

*Plin. Epist. l. iii. ep. 1.*

“ Corinthian brass, more precious far than gold.”

*Stat. Sylv. 2.*

## CHAP. XII.

**Progress of the Culinary Art. — Sumptuary Laws. — Epicurism. — Instances of Profusion. — Supper. — Favorite Dishes. — Manner of Drinking. — Anecdote of Antony and Cleopatra. — Games of Chance. — Lotteries. — Buffoons and Dancing Girls. — The Parting Cup. — Presents. — Anecdote of Domitian. — Protervian Sacrifice. — The Comessatio.**

**DURING** the most distinguished æra of the republic, the repasts were prepared with sufficient attention to elegance and abundance, but the refinements of cookery were but little understood, and the pleasures of the table consisted more in society and rational conversation than in the indulgence of sensual gratification. We have already seen how Cato the Censor spoke of them, and the animated description given by Horace, at a still later period, breathes equal conviviality tempered with discretion :—

“ O ! nights which furnish such a feast,  
As even gods themselves might taste !  
Thus fare my friends, thus feed my slaves,  
Alert, on what their master leaves.

Each person there may drink and fill  
As much or little as he will,  
Exempted from the bedlam rules  
Of roaring prodigals and fools ;  
Whether in merry-mood, or whim,  
He takes a bumper to the brim,  
Or better pleas'd to let it pass,  
Grows mellow with a scanty glass.  
Nor this man's house, nor that's estate,  
Becomes the subject of debate ;  
Nor whether Lepos the buffoon  
Knows how to dance a rigadoon :  
But what concerns us more, I trow,  
And were a scandal not to know ;  
If happiness consists in store  
Of riches, or in virtue more ;  
Whether esteem, or private ends,  
Directs us in our choice of friends ;  
What's real good without disguise,  
And where its great perfection lies."

*Francis, b. ii. sat. 6.*

But this comparative moderation yielded to the tide of Asiatic luxury which inundated Rome after the conquest of the eastern provinces, and sumptuousness and profusion were carried to an extent almost as incredible as it was, in most instances, absurd. The cook, who had formerly been considered as the meanest of the slaves, became the most important

officer of the household; and his art, which was before held in some contempt, rose to the rank of a science, the professors of which were so valued that, Pliny says, the purchase of a cook cost as much as the expense of a triumph; and no mortal was so valued as the slave who was most expert in the art of ruining his master.

Sumptuary laws were, indeed, enacted to check the progress of this excess: such were those known as the *Orchian*, *Fannian*, *Didian*, and *Licinian*: the first merely limited the number of the guests; the others went more to the root of the evil, by regulating the expense, and subjecting both the entertainer, and his company, to fines if it were exceeded. Julius Cæsar revived some which had fallen into disuse, and was so strict in enforcing obedience to them, that he frequently sent the lictors to the houses of persons who were informed against for a breach of the statutes, and had the dishes carried off from their tables, if they exceeded the permitted number. Augustus passed an edict by which the expense of a repast, on ordinary occasions, was not to exceed 200 sesterces,—about 1*l.* 12*s.* 6*d.*—300 on days of solemnity, and 1000 for a wed-

ding feast: this was somewhat less severe than those preceding it, and the sum was afterwards extended to 2000 sesterces.<sup>1</sup> But luxury, still stronger than the laws, broke through the barriers they interposed: so that earth and sea, as historians tell us, scarcely sufficed to supply the tables; and, at length, epicurism reached to such a sickly pitch of refinement, that viands were only esteemed in proportion to their cost. Thus, Maltese cranes, peacocks, and rare singing birds, although hardly eatable, were esteemed great delicacies, and their tongues and brains still greater; oysters from the coast of Britain were more prized than those taken on their own shores, though the former could never have been eaten fresh; and

<sup>1</sup> “*Sumptuary Laws.*” The severity of these laws can only be estimated by a reference to the prices at which the delicacies of the table could be purchased, and on this subject very little information has been obtained. We learn that, in the early part of the reign of Augustus, the price of a *fat peacock* was about 12 shillings, and of the eggs 15 pence: but these were extraordinary rarities. It should also be observed, that the sumptuary laws did not extend to fruit or vegetables; and it appears, that the bon-vivants of Rome indemnified themselves by a lavish use of them for the restrictions imposed on more substantial fare.

we are told of a single sur-mullet, which had reached a size somewhat larger than common, having been sold for a sum equivalent to fifty guineas.<sup>2</sup> Nor was this all: gluttony kept pace with epicurism, and was indulged in to such disgusting excess, that emetics were used to enable the stomach, already gorged with a full meal, to bear a further load; and though we are not to suppose that so loathsome a practice was universal, it has, yet, been too much animadverted upon by contemporary authors, to allow us to conclude that it was confined to a few individual instances.

The profusion which reigned in some of their entertainments was such, that Suetonius tells us of 2000 fishes and 7000 birds, of the rarest kinds, having been served at one given by

<sup>2</sup> “*Sur-mullet.*” This fish was found in abundance in the markets of Rome; it was not, therefore, its rarity, but its uncommon size, that commanded the extravagant price mentioned in the text. The fact alluded to is not isolated; various instances of such absurd profusion are recorded, not only by the poets—who might be expected to exaggerate—but by graver writers. As the sur-mullet was valued in proportion to its bigness, so was the pike for the opposite quality.

L. Vitellius to his brother the emperor. And Plutarch, speaking of the excesses of Antony at Alexandria, says, that eight wild boars were usually roasted as part of the supper; not that they were intended to be served up together; but, that, as it was uncertain at what hour Antony would choose to sup, there was always a variety of food in different stages of preparation to be ready at the moment he might call for it.<sup>3</sup>

The table of Heliogabalus was regularly served with ragoûts of the livers and brains of small birds, the heads of parrots and pheasants, and the tongues of peacocks and nightingales: the carcasses were given to the beasts in his menagerie. But our astonishment at the absurdity of this extravagance, in a monarch, will be lessened if we reflect upon that of the celebrated Apicius, and of Æsop, the famous tragic actor; the latter of whom served up to his guests a dish filled with birds which had each been taught either to sing or to speak, and dissolved pearls in the wine which his company drank; and the former, after having

<sup>3</sup> *Sueton. in Vit. Vitell.—Plut. in Vit. Ant.*

wasted half a million sterling on the mere pleasures of the table, put an end to his existence,—not out of regret for his past folly, but in despair that eighty thousand pounds which still remained of his former fortune, would not enable him to continue it.\* Pro-

\* “*Apicius and Æsop.*” Epicurism appears to have been hereditary in the family of the former: besides the Apicius alluded to, and already so renowned in the annals of gastronomy, there were two others of the same name almost equally celebrated for their skill in that profound science, and their profusion in its application; one of whom lived in the time of the republic, the other in that of the Emperor Trajan: but the *great* Apicius, the immortal author of “*The Art of Cookery*,” flourished in the reigns of Augustus and Tiberius. Vide *Seneca de Consolat. ad. Helv. c. x. et de Vit. beat. c. xi.*

*Æsop*, notwithstanding his profligacy, is said to have died worth 160,000*l.* Horace ascribes the anecdote of the pearl to his son:—

“ An actor’s son dissolv’d a wealthy pearl  
(The precious ear-ring of his favourite girl)  
In vinegar, and thus luxurious quaff’d,  
A thousand solid talents at a draught.”

Be that as it may, the circumstance was not singular, as the Emperor Caligula entertained his guests in a similar manner, and Cleopatra is known to have gained a bet by dissolving a pearl in vinegar and swallowing it; but

digality of expense seems, indeed, to have been more studied than delicacy of taste, and sumptuous waste more than elegant arrangement.

The supper, if a meal taken before four o'clock in the afternoon may be so called consistently with modern ideas, was usually composed of two courses, and a dessert. The first consisted of eggs stained of various colours, shell-fish, vegetables, and such trifles as compose the *entremêts* at our tables; the second comprised the *ragoûts*, roast meat, and fish; the latter, particularly, was a luxury in such request, that without it no Roman of fashion could be persuaded that he had supped. The dessert contained the usual proportion of fruit and confectionary, much in the modern style; but it was customary to serve it on a separate table, and even the more substantial parts of the supper were occasionally brought in on portable tables, or placed before the guests on frames.

Some of their greatest dainties would be

the acid must have been stronger than that in use at our tables, which would not easily penetrate the enamel of a pearl.

apt to startle a modern epicure: snails, and a species of white maggot found in old timber, were fattened with peculiar care, and served only at the best tables; stewed sows' teats, fricaseed sucking-puppies,<sup>5</sup> and water-rats, were in great request; and, according to Horace,—

“A lamb's fat paunch was a delicious treat.”

Francis, b. i. ep. 15.

Poultry, of every kind known at present, except the turkey,<sup>6</sup> were abundant, and in common use; but the favourite fowl was a goose, of

<sup>5</sup> “*Sows' teats, and sucking-puppies.*” Pliny says, that the latter were worthy of being served at a supper for the gods:—*Hist. Nat.* l. xxix. c. 4. And Martial celebrates a cook who prepared the paps of a sow with so much art that they appeared as if still full of milk:—l. xiii. epig. 43. Whoever wishes to taste them superlatively well dressed, will find the most approved receipt in *Apicius de Art. Coquin.* l. vii. c. 2.

<sup>6</sup> “*Turkeys.*” It has been generally supposed, that the birds known to the ancients under the name of *Meleagrides* were the same as our turkeys; and that conjecture has given rise to much learned controversy. But Professor Beckmann, who has summed up the proofs and arguments, on both sides, with great perspicuity, has clearly shown, that they were not known in Europe until after the discovery of America, in which country they are indigenous; and that, the birds mentioned in

which incredible numbers were annually consumed. Whether this partiality arose from veneration for the memorable service rendered to the state by this bird; or from other qualities more easily appreciated, and more generally acknowledged; or whether its destruction may not rather be considered as a trait of ingratitude—has already been made the subject of grave discussion among learned commentators, and still remains an unsettled point. Some have supposed, that time effaced the recollection of the obligation; while others, anxious to reconcile the conduct of the Romans

ancient authors by the name of *Gallinæ Africanæ*—Guinea-fowls—were, in fact, the same as the *Meleagrides*.

It appears, that they were not introduced into England until late in the reign of Henry the Eighth, as they are not mentioned in the regulations of his household, (*inserted in the Archæologia*, vol. iii. p. 157,) in which all fowls used in the royal kitchen are named. But if we may judge from the following couplets, of the date of the year 1585, they must then have become plentiful:—

“ Beefe, mutton, and porke, shred pies of the best,  
Pig, veale, goose, and capon, *and turkie well drest*;  
Cheese, apples, and nuts, jolie carols to heare,  
As then in the countrie, is counted good cheare.”

See *Beckmann's Hist. of Inven.* vol. ii. art. *Turkeys*.

in this affair, with their principles, have contended, that they ever respected the immediate descendants of the Capitoline Geese, the brood of which was preserved with the utmost care; and that, it would be unreasonable to expect that their gratitude should have extended to the collateral branches. The livers of these animals were, as they still are in some parts of the continent, esteemed great delicacies, and means were then, as now, contrived to increase their natural size; but if we may credit the following enumeration of rarities, the epicurism of the ancients extended even to the colour of the bird that produced them:—

“ The slaves behind in mighty charger bore  
A crane in pieces torn, and powder'd o'er  
With salt and flour; and a *white gander's liver*,  
Stuff'd fat with figs, bespoke the curious giver;  
Besides the wings of hares, for so, it seems,  
No man of luxury the back esteems.  
Then saw we blackbirds with o'er-roasted breast  
Laid on the board, and ring-doves rumpless drest:  
Delicious fare!”—

*Francis's Hor. b. ii. s. 8.*

But the most sumptuous dish was an entire boar, roasted, and stuffed, *à la troyenne*, with game and poultry. The animal itself was in

such esteem with the lovers of good cheer, that Juvenal terms it—

——“ a beast

Designed by nature for the social feast !”

*Owen, sat. i.*

And Horace, who was no contemptible judge in such matters, boasts of—

——“ A Lucanian boar, of tender kind  
Caught, says our host, in a soft southern wind.  
Around him lay whatever could excite,  
With pungent force, the jaded appetite;  
Rapes, lettuce, radishes, anchovy brine,  
With skerrets, and the lees of Coan wine.”

*Francis, b. ii. sat. 8.*

Fish was sometimes brought to table alive, and weighed in the presence of the company, that they might ascertain its value, and enjoy, in anticipation, the pleasure of feasting on it when dressed. When any very rare dish was served, the slaves who bore it were decorated with flowers; it was announced with great ceremony, ushered in with music, and received with the joyous acclamations of the expectant guests. We are told, that the Emperor Sept. Severus was complimented on the honors he had thus rendered to a sturgeon; and more particularly, on the renovation of the custom,

which, it would appear, had fallen somewhat into disuse. In the reign of Domitian, the senate was convened to consult on the best mode of dressing a turbot of extraordinary size which had been presented to the emperor; and although it, certainly, formed no part of the duties of senators to regulate the mysteries of the despot's kitchen, yet Domitian probably knew, that no council of cooks could furnish him with better advice. The turbot was boiled: but the most important point—the sauce with which it was served—has not, unhappily for the science of the table, been recorded. It must, however, afford consolation to the amateurs of good-eating, that Horace has, with commendable care, preserved the receipt for the *sauce epicurienne* of the Augustan age:—

“Two sorts,” (*he says*) “of sauce are worthy to be known;  
Simple the first, and of sweet oil alone:  
The other—mix’d with rich and generous wine,  
And the true pickle of Byzantian brine,  
Let it, with shredded herbs and saffron boil,  
And when it cools, pour in Venafran oil.”

*Francis, b. ii. sat. 4.*

Wine was served in large earthen vases, which circulated as the decanters do after dinner at an English table, and bore, each, a label

describing the age and quality of the liquor it contained. There were cups, to drink out of, of various dimensions and materials, which it would be tedious to particularize: that most generally used, was called a *cyathus*; it was a small goblet—at elegant tables usually of gold or silver, not uncommonly ornamented with precious stones—and contained about the same quantity as a modern wine glass. Pliny says, that during the reign of Nero, vases and cups, in imitation of crystal, were obtained from Alexandria, in Egypt, at that time celebrated for the manufacture of glass.<sup>7</sup> But they were both rare and expensive; and although mentioned by ancient authors as articles of great luxury, and notwithstanding it is certain that the ancients were, from a very remote period, acquainted with the art of fabricating glass, and

<sup>7</sup> “*Glass*.”—Pliny ascribes the invention of glass to a period about 1000 years antecedent to the Christian *Æra*; (*Hist. Nat.* l. xxxvi. c. 26; )—but the manner in which he describes it to have taken place is doubted.

Two ancient glasses found at Nismes, which are described in the celebrated work of Count Caylus, were covered with figures; but the period at which they were made has not been ascertained.—*See Recueil d'Antiquités*, vol. ii. p. 363.

even, at a later date, with that of cutting it, yet, if we may judge from the specimens found among the ruins of Herculaneum and Pompeii, they were of coarse materials and rude workmanship. The wine, when brought to table, was passed through strainers in which were small pieces of ice, and it was sometimes both cooled and weakened by an admixture of snow:<sup>3</sup> in winter, it was usual to temper it with warm water. It was not poured from the vase, but the cyathus was dipped into it, and, in houses where much etiquette of attendance was observed, that duty was performed by boys attired with more care than the other slaves.

It was customary to drink toasts and healths: and sometimes, when any very animating sentiment was given, the company pledged it by throwing their chaplets into the wine; which was called "*drinking the crowns.*" During the preparations for the battle of Actium, Antony, having suspected Cleopatra of a design to poison him, refused to partake of any thing at her

<sup>3</sup> "*Snow.*" The ancients were acquainted with the modern method of preserving ice: the invention has been attributed to Alexander the Great.

table until she had previously tasted it. Cleopatra laughed at his fears ; and, having dressed herself in a wreath of poisoned flowers, she proposed, after supper,—“ to drink the crowns.” Antony, out of gallantry, immediately threw the one she wore into his cup, and had already carried it to his lips, when the queen, seizing his arm, informed him of his danger ; and thus proved to him, that his suspicions were as groundless as his precautions were unavailing. These chaplets, however, were not always composed of flowers. The ancients imagined that certain plants possessed the quality of preventing intoxication, and, with that view, they bound their heads with wreaths of ivy, of vervain, and of parsley ;<sup>9</sup> yet, with whimsical inconsistency, they used provocatives to promote drinking which may fairly vie with the “ broiled-bones,”

<sup>9</sup> “ *Wreaths of ivy, of vervain and of parsley :—*

“ With living wreaths to crown our heads,  
The parsley's vivid verdure spreads ;  
To bind your hair the ivy twines.”

*Francis's Hor. b. iv. ode 11.*

The Romans borrowed this custom from the Greeks, who, themselves, took it from the orientals : allusion is pointedly made to it in the Old Testament : *Isaiah xxxiii.* 1 and 3.

" devilled-biscuits," and " anchovy-toasts," of the moderns; and we are exultingly told, that—

" Stew'd shrimps and Afric cockles shall excite  
A jaded drinker's languid appetite."

Or—

" Grapes and apples, with the lees of wine,  
White pepper, common salt, and herring-brine."

*Francis's Hor. b. ii. sat. 4.*

After supper, and sometimes even between the courses, they played at dice: for although gaming was forbidden, except during the feast of the Saturnalia,<sup>10</sup> yet the prohibition either extended only to houses of public resort, or was not enforced; and it was so general, that the emperors themselves indulged in it, and even Cato considered it as an amusement befitting old age. But Cato regarded it merely as a

<sup>10</sup> " *The feast of the Saturnalia* " was intended to commemorate, and in some degree represented, the ancient equality of condition that reigned among mankind. During its continuance, the power of masters over their slaves was suspended, and they associated together with the utmost freedom, all distinction of rank, even in dress, being then entirely laid aside. It was held in the month of December, and lasted, at first three, and afterwards five, days, which were one continued scene of joyous festivity.

relaxation, and did not contemplate such a stake as could either excite the passions, or injure the fortune; whereas high-play was pursued by the nobility of Rome with all the frenzy which distinguishes that odious and destructive habit.

They had two kinds of dice: the *tesseræ*, and the *tali*. The first were cubes, like ours, and marked, also, on the faces, with numbers from one to six, but with the numeral characters instead of dots. The *tali* were oblong squares, and only numbered on the four sides—the deuce and the cinq being omitted. They were thrown from a box in many respects similar to that still in use.

The most usual game was one of mere chance, depending on the highest throw, and was played with three *tesseræ*. There was also one somewhat similar to our backgammon, or rather to a game much in vogue on the continent, and nearly resembling it, called *trictrac*. It was played with four *tali*, and fifteen counters on each side; the latter generally of gold and silver, or of differently coloured glass. The table on which it was played contained twelve points on each side, divided by a line, and the counters were moved, according to the throws upon the

tali, until they were forced over the boundary. The best throw at this game, was when all the dice presented different numbers; this was called *venus*; the worst was four aces, which were termed *canes*, or, in terms of still stronger disappointment, *damnosi canes*.

Many other games of chance were played; some from a spirit of gaming, others for mere amusement; but our information respecting them is very imperfect. One, however, remains to the present day—the *morra*—and is still common among the lower classes in Italy: it is played by two persons, and consists in holding up one, or both hands, and suddenly raising some of the fingers, while each, at the same moment, guesses at the number stretched out by the other.

When the emperors, and indeed, even when private individuals of rank, gave an entertainment, part of the amusement sometimes consisted in a lottery, in which each ticket represented a prize. Considerable sums were occasionally distributed in this manner among the guests; but not in actual money: the prizes were generally pictures of various merit, trinkets, or things of more importance, contrasted with others of ridiculously small amount. Thus, in

one given by Heliogabalus, one of the lots consisted of ten camels, and another of ten flies; others, ten ostriches, and ten eggs; ten pounds of gold, and ten of lead; and all in equally absurd proportion.

Soon after the establishment of the republic, it became customary at their entertainments, to sing the praises of their great men to the sound of the Flute and the Cithara. But after the conquest of the Asiatic provinces, jugglers,<sup>11</sup> buffoons, and dancing girls were introduced; and a kind of pantomime—not always of the most modest description—was substituted for the ancient hymns and chorusses. These licentious exhibitions palled the sense they were meant to stimulate, and led to such brutal depravity of taste, that gladiators were frequently introduced into them; and a diversion—if such, indeed, it may be called—which is a stain upon the manners, and the morals, of the Roman public, was adopted in the private assemblies of the patricians. In justice, however, to the

<sup>11</sup> “*Jugglers.*” Many of the deceptions still practised by these people appear to have been familiar to the ancients: particularly the various tricks with fire, and with cups and balls.

society of Rome, it must not be concealed, that ladies and young persons retired whenever any scenes unfit to be represented before them were about to be exhibited. Nor, amidst all this extravagance of luxury, and laxity of manners, if not of morals, were splendid examples of moderation, and propriety of conduct, wanting among the men: at the tables of both the Pliny's, and of Atticus, readings from celebrated authors were substituted for the dances and combats exhibited at other houses; and the sober maxims of Cicero on this subject are too well known to require repetition.

The supper ended, as it began, with libations to the gods: prayers were offered for the safety and prosperity of the host, whose health was drank at the same time; together, during the reign of the Cæsars, with that also of the Emperor; and a last cup was quaffed to one general "good-night." This parting-cup—the  *poculum boni genii*  of the ancients—was a custom long religiously adhered to by our hospitable forefathers, ere it was exploded by the cold refinement of modern manners; and is still preserved in the cordial stirrup-cup of our Scotch and Irish neighbours.

On taking leave of the host, he usually made

his guests some present, more or less valuable as inclination or circumstances dictated. Some instances are recorded of extreme prodigality on such occasions, others of absurdity, and even of barbarity. Among the former, Cleopatra's gifts to Antony are prominent. After the superb entertainments made for him at Tarsus, she, each time, presented him with the entire service of plate, of the most costly description ; and to the numerous friends who accompanied him, she gave the tapestry and couches which served for the occasion, and the golden cups and vases of which they had made use. To some of the most distinguished among them, she gave litters with their bearers ; to others, horses richly caparisoned ; and to all, young Ethiopian slaves to carry flambeaux before them to their lodgings. The lavish munificence of Cleopatra to Antony, may not, indeed, excite much wonder : but we are told, that Verus invited eleven friends to a supper, after which he gave to each of them the page who waited upon him at table, and all the costly cups of gold and crystal of which he had made use ; a maître-d'hôtel, with a complete service of plate ; vases of gold, filled with the most precious perfumes ; and similar animals alive, both quadrupeds and birds, to those which

had appeared at the table: to crown all, they were conveyed home, each in a splendid carriage, which was presented to them, together with the set of mules by which it was drawn, and the muleteer by whom it was driven.

It is related of the Emperor Domitian, that he summoned a party of senators and knights to one of the entertainments given by him on the occasion of his pretended victory over the Dacii. They were introduced, with much solemnity, into a saloon entirely hung with black, and all the furniture of the same sombre description. On taking their places, each found before him a small pillar, such as was usually raised over tombs, with his name inscribed on it, and surmounted by a sepulchral lamp; and they were attended by naked children, blackened from head to foot, to represent so many infernal dæmons. These sprites danced round the table with hideous grimaces, and then presented to the guests such meats as were used only at funeral ceremonies. A profound silence was observed by every one but Domitian, who, in a tone of portentous seriousness, entertained the company with lugubrious stories of murders and apparitions. It may be imagined with what appetite the supper was eaten; particularly

when it is recollected, that the tyrant frequently entertained those unhappy wretches sumptuously at night, whom he put to death on the following day. At length, the guests were dismissed: but they were conducted home with much caution and mystery, and soon after their arrival a messenger was announced from the Emperor. Each concluded that it was his death warrant: but it was, on the contrary, the little imp who had waited upon him at table, now divested of his ominous black, elegantly dressed, and bearing, as a present, the monumental pillar—which proved to be of silver,—and some article of plate.

The remains of the repast were partly distributed among the slaves, and such things as were not fit for further use were burned. This was a kind of sacrifice, and was termed *protervia*; in allusion to which, Cato said of a spendthrift who, after having squandered his fortune, accidentally set fire to his house—"that he had finished according to rule, with the protervian sacrifice."

Although the supper was the last regular meal of the day, it was not unfrequently followed by a collation—called *comessatio*,—after which the guests sat late, and drank deep; and

this additional repast became at length so general, that invitations were given for it separately. It, therefore, answered to the supper of the present day, as the Roman supper did to our dinner; and their dinner, as we have already seen, was so slight and irregular, that it may be considered as the modern *déjeûner à la fourchette*.

## CHAP XIII.

Sobriety of the ancient Romans—Instances of subsequent excess.—Italian wines.—Manner of planting the Vines.—Vintage.—Mode of making, and preserving, Wine.—Grecian Wines.—Fermented liquors.—Horticulture. — Bees. — Sugar. — Coffee.—Tea.—Foreign Commerce.

IN the early ages of the commonwealth, the men were not permitted to drink wine until they had attained their thirtieth year. The use of it was altogether interdicted to women: if they infringed this rule, their husbands, or even their nearest relatives, were allowed to chastise them; and a law existed, in the time of Romulus, which subjected them to capital punishment if found in a state of intoxication. Whether it was the scarcity of the liquor, or the more probable motive of attention to the morals of the people, which gave rise to the prohibition, does not appear: but, from whatever cause it

proceeded, certain it is, that their ancient sobriety ceased so soon as the grape became abundant, and excess in wine became so prevalent in Rome, that Pliny speaks of men—in polite society—who, after having drank to repletion, took goblet after goblet until they regorged it; then recommenced, and repeated this disgusting essay of their powers several times at the same sitting. Of this number was Mark Antony, who published an account of his drunken revels; and the younger Cicero, who acquired great celebrity by the quantity he could drink at a draught; “as if,” says Pliny, “he wished to deprive Antony, the murderer of his father, of the glory of being the greatest drunkard of the age.”<sup>1</sup>

The Emperor Tiberius is recorded to have passed two whole days and nights at table with Pomponius Flaccus and Lucius Piso, whose convivial qualities he afterwards rewarded—the one with the government of Syria, the other with the prefecture of the city;—and was so far from concealing the motive for their advancement, that the patents of their appointments expressed it. Seneca, indeed, says of him, that

<sup>1</sup> *Plin. Hist. Nat.* l. xiv. c. 22.

he was only drunk once in his life, and that was, from the first moment he became intoxicated until the day of his death.

Cossus, also prefect of the city under Tiberius, was in the constant habit of going drunk to the senate, whence he was frequently carried in so profound a sleep as not to be awakened by the motion of his removal. And Cato himself was accused of indulging too freely in the pleasures of the table.

Even females at length gave themselves up to these excesses. A great moralist, of the time of Nero, represents them passing whole nights at table, and, with charged goblets in their hands, not only vying with, but surpassing, the most robust debauchees, in intemperance.<sup>2</sup> But the picture which he draws of their licentiousness, is, no doubt, over-charged, and the censure too generally applied, for we have already seen, that the ladies usually withdrew before the orgies of the men commenced.

Pliny considers the libations instituted by Romulus—which were of milk—and the prohibition by Numa to pour wine on the funeral pyres in honor of the dead, as sufficient proofs

<sup>2</sup> “A great moralist.”—Seneca, epist. 95.

that vines were then rare in Italy. They became very common in the sequel; and were probably first obtained from Greece. It was the wines of Italy which attracted the Gauls thither in the dictatorship of Camillus, within little more than three centuries after the death of Numa; and it is well known, that wine was made in large quantities in the consulate of Lucius Opimius, more than a century before the Christian æra. The territory of Capua alone furnished several different kinds, and all of excellent quality: that of Falernus was the most esteemed; yet it was so harsh and strong that it required to be kept at least ten years before it was drinkable, and was then mixed with honey or with sweet wine, in order to ameliorate it. But the reign of this wine, and the other growths of Capua, was not of long duration: they fell into disrepute in consequence of the avidity of the proprietors of the vineyards, who, seduced by a false prospect of profit, used means to increase the quantity without due regard to the quality.

Vineyards were at length so multiplied, that they impeded the more necessary cultivation of grain, and the Emperor Domitian found it necessary to order those in the provinces to be

reduced in the proportion of one half: he also forbade all new plantations in Italy. Suetonius, indeed, says, that he did not enforce this edict, and it appears, that Asia was exempted from it. But many authors assure us, that the decree of Domitian remained in force until the reign of Probus, who caused his soldiers to plant vines on the hills of Gaul and Pannonia, and then gave them to the inhabitants to cultivate; allowing them, at the same time, to plant as many others as they pleased. Thus, it would appear, that France and Hungary are indebted to the last mentioned Emperor for their vineyards.<sup>3</sup>

It was the custom throughout ancient Italy, and is to this day in all Umbria, to attach the vines to trees, whose branches were thus festooned with them: Horace alludes to it when he uses the figure of marrying the vines to the poplar; and both Virgil and Catullus employ a similar metaphor:—

<sup>3</sup> The “*Vineyards*” of Burgundy are supposed to be as old as the age of the Antonines. The district of *Beaune*—still esteemed for the quality of its wine—is presumed to be that celebrated by the Romans under the name of *Pagus Arebrignus*. See, *Gibbon's Decl. of the Rom. Emp.* vol. i. ch. 2. and *Suetonius in Vit. Domit.* l. xiv.

——“ Aspiring vines  
Embrace the *husband elms* in amorous twines.”

*Dryden, Georg. b. ii.*

“ As on the naked plain th' *unwedded vine*  
Nor lifts the head, nor forms the generous wine,  
But sinking with its weight, its tallest shoot  
Reflected, bends to meet the distant root;  
Unhonored, worthless, and forlorn it stands,  
Untill'd by lab'ring steers, or rustic hands :  
But should a *husband elm* its aid extend,  
Both lab'ring steers and rustic hinds attend.”

*Catullus, b. xii. 49. .*

The vintage was then, as now, a season of joy and festivity. The feast of the *Vinalia* was then celebrated,—

“ When Roman youth, deriv'd from ruined Troy,  
In rude Saturnian rhymes express their joy ;  
With taunts, and laughter loud, their audience please,  
Deform'd with vizards, cut from bark of trees ;  
In jolly hymns they praise the god of wine,  
Whose earthen images adorn the pine,  
And there are hung on high, in honor of the vine.”

*Dryden's Virg. Georg. b. ii.*

The process of making wine was simple, and much the same as that still in use. The finest grapes were first crushed with the feet, after which they were placed in a press, and the joint produce constituted the best quality ; the

refuse clusters were then added to the pulp, and thrown into water, and from this mixture an inferior wine was made for the use of the slaves. The must was strained either through bags, or baskets formed of rushes, and was afterwards clarified with the yelk of pigeons' eggs.

The wine was kept in large jars, formed like urns, and usually stopped with a composition of pitch and mastich, cork being but seldom used for that purpose. The date of the vintage was marked on the stopple, which was sometimes sealed, also, with the signet of the grower, as an attestation of the genuine quality of the contents. These jars were usually ranged in cellars, one over the other, but some were hung to the walls, and others were buried in the earth, or even sometimes bedded in masonry. They were occasionally, also, placed in the attics, or on the tops of flat-roofed buildings, from an opinion that the action of the sun and air contributed to ripen the wine; and, with a similar view, they were sometimes suspended over the smoke of a fire. Skins were made use of to transport the wine;† for the art of making

† “Skins were made use of to transport the wine.” This custom is still continued in many parts of Europe, but particularly throughout the Peninsula.

hooped vessels was for a long time unknown : it is supposed that we are indebted for the invention to the Gauls who inhabited the banks of the Po, but at what precise date does not appear.

It is well known that wine was preserved to a great age : there was some in use, in the time of Pliny the elder, which was made during the consulship of L. Opimius, and was, consequently, then about two hundred years old. It had a bitter taste, and had acquired the consistence of honey : but it is probable, that the latter quality was artificial, rather than the effect of age, as the Romans used to inspissate the wine they intended to reserve, by boiling down the must. It was chiefly employed to give strength and flavor to other wine, with which it was mixed in small quantities ; and the price was so excessive, that an ounce weight of it has been calculated, from the text of Pliny, to have cost about four pounds sterling,

Notwithstanding the excellence of the Italian wines, those of Greece were in greater estimation : particularly that from the Island of Chios ; which was so high priced, that, at the greatest entertainments, only one cup of it was presented to each guest. In process of time, however, it

was lavished in equal profusion with every other luxury. We are told, that Lucullus gave a fête to the people, on his return from Asia, at which there was expended a quantity of wine equal to 100,000 barrels; and Cæsar gave public entertainments, at the celebration of four different triumphs in the same month, at each of which 22,000 tables were spread, which flowed with Falernian and Chian wine.<sup>5</sup>

The Romans had also mead, metheglin, and other fermented liquors: Pliny says, that nearly two hundred different sorts were in use; but among this number, it is to be presumed that he included the various denominations of wine. He speaks of a kind of beer that was made by fermenting several species of grain in water: and mentions it as an instance of the depravity of the times, that men, not satisfied with wine, contrived that even water should contribute to inebriate them.<sup>6</sup> Some of their wines they mixed with honey, and occasionally with

<sup>5</sup> “*Chian wine.*” Dr. Hill says, that the usual price of the best Grecian wine did not exceed seven or eight pounds sterling a hogshead: but that an amphora, or nine gallons, of similar quality, when matured by age, sold for the same sum. *Essays on Anct. Greece*, ess. xv

<sup>6</sup> *Plin. Hist. Nat.* l. xiv. c. 22.

sea-water,<sup>7</sup> and others were flavored with an infusion of wormwood, saffron, myrrh, and various odoriferous herbs; spices were also employed to add to their strength and pungency: but it does not appear that they were acquainted with the distillation of ardent spirits.

The fruits that are indigenous to the soil of Italy, are comparatively few, and those rich productions of nature which now flourish in such profusion under its genial climate, were chiefly acquired from the coasts of Barbary and the Levant. Even the Olive, which afterwards became so important an object of cultivation, was long a stranger to its shores, and was wholly unknown to the early Romans. In the remote ages, their gardens afforded little else than a scanty list of the most ordinary roots and pot-herbs, pulse, and the common trees of the orchard. At a later period, however, there is reason to suppose they were acquainted with most of the finer fruits and vegetables; but at

<sup>7</sup> “*Sea-water.*” Proofs that the ancients sometimes mixed their wine with sea-water are to be found in various ancient authors. Some modern commentators say, that it was with a view to render it lighter of digestion; others, that it was only added to wine that was boiled, to accelerate its solution,

what time they were successively introduced is uncertain; and, as the Romans applied the name of apple indiscriminately to every foreign fruit that bore a resemblance to it in form, only distinguishing them from each other by the name of the country whence they were derived, this portion of their horticulture is, in consequence, involved in considerable obscurity. Planting, grafting, and the various operations of the nursery and kitchen-garden, were well understood, and diligently practised; but the important improvement of the forcing-house is of modern invention.

Bees were objects of peculiar care: and, indeed, among a people who were unprovided with sugar, we may imagine how highly honey must have been prized, and how important its production to the interests of rural economy.

Although it is certain, that the Romans did not make use of sugar, and that the cane will not arrive at maturity in the climate of Italy, we should yet be cautious how we admit the generally received inference, that they were entirely unacquainted with it, or even with the manner in which it is produced. For, they had a direct commercial intercourse, through Egypt

and the Red Sea, with the coast of Malabar, whence they annually imported large quantities of silk, of jewellery, of spices, and of drugs; and, as many Roman merchants were personally engaged in this traffic, it is difficult to conceive how they could have remained wholly ignorant of a substance which is supposed to have been produced time immemorial in India.<sup>8</sup> That it was not transported to Rome, as an article of trade, may be accounted for by its great bulk and trifling comparative value, which must have formed serious objections with the merchant, if the defective communication between the countries was not of itself an insurmountable obstacle.

These observations would equally apply to coffee, which is an indigenous plant of Arabia Felix, and found in great abundance on the shores of the Red Sea, were it also certain that

<sup>8</sup> "India."—The Island of Ceylon,—called *Taprobana* by the Romans, and *Serendib* by the Arabs—was the chief mart for this trade, which was conducted, by sea, from the Port of Myos-hormos on the Red-sea.

The two great pearl fisheries were the same as at present—Ormuz and Cape Comorin.—Diamonds, it is supposed, were supplied from the mines of Jamelphur, in Bengal. *Gibbon, Dec. of the Rom. Emp. v. i. ch. 2.*

its cultivation for domestic purposes dated as far back as that of sugar. And even tea, may have been procured from China, whence it is supposed that the chief part of the silk thus imported was derived.

The foreign commerce of the Romans appears very unimportant when compared with the extensive mercantile transactions of our own times. They traded, it is true, not only to the East Indies, but to all the ports of the Mediterranean, and occasionally even to those of England. But, if we except the corn received on the account of government from Sicily and the Levant, their importations consisted of little else than articles of mere luxury: and, having no exportable manufactures of their own, nor any surplus product of the soil, their purchases were necessarily made in bullion; a medium which must, of itself, have narrowed the limits of their commercial dealings, if other causes also did not contribute to circumscribe them. The interests of commerce were little understood, and less appreciated: traffic was considered dishonorable, and they who engaged in it were held in contempt: the consequence was, that men of capital would not openly devote themselves to it, and it was relinquished to slaves

and freemen, who seldom possessed means to conduct it on an extensive scale. Their most important trade was that already mentioned, to the coast of Malabar, yet its real annual amount fell short of a million sterling; but, through the imposts with which it was loaded, the vast expence at which it was conducted, and the enormous profits realized by those engaged in it, it has been computed that the goods cost the Italian consumer about one hundred times their original value.

Their merchant-ships were of a size proportioned to the kind of coasting trade to which they were necessarily confined by the imperfect state of navigation which preceded the discovery of the Polar attraction of the magnet;<sup>9</sup> and, accordingly, we find that, in the time of Cæsar, vessels of this description were considered large if they reached the burden of 50 tons. We read, indeed, of some being built by the Ptolemies of greater measurement than any since

<sup>9</sup> "*Magnet.*" Although the ancients were unacquainted with the powers of the magnetic needle, yet they were not ignorant of the attractive property of lode-stone; which is said to have been accidentally discovered by a peasant walking, in hob-nailed-shoes, over a rock of lode.

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known; one ship, which conveyed from Egypt a celebrated obelisk—of one solid block of granite 80 feet in length, that formerly stood in the circus of Nero, and is now erected before the church of St. Peter's—is said to have been ballasted with more than a thousand tons of grain; and another to have been 400 English feet in length: but these must be viewed as phenomena in the naval architecture of that period.

## CHAP. XIV.

Music, and Musical Instruments.—The Hydraulicon.—  
 The Drama.—Actors—Dancers.—Theatric Factions.—  
 Theatres.—Amphitheatres.—The Colisœum.—Gladia-  
 tors.—Combats of Wild-beasts.—Naumachiæ.

THE ROMANS are supposed to have derived their knowledge of music, as a science, from the Greeks; but, as Rousseau has observed, when treating the subject of the Grecian songs,—“this nation, more military than sensual, for a long time made but a very coarse use of music and lyric poetry; and in these particulars, never approached the voluptuous grace and elegance of the Greeks. It seems as if, among the Romans, melody always remained in an unrefined state. Their hymeneal odes were rather noise and clamour than airs; and it is hardly to be presumed that the satirical songs of the soldiers, in the triumphs of their generals, consisted of a very agreeable melody.”

On the justice of this reflection we have not the means of deciding, as, unfortunately, no specimens of Roman melodies have been pre-

served. But it is certain, that their instrumental music was extremely circumscribed, as the only stringed instrument they possessed was the *cithara*—a kind of lyre; or small harp—of which there were, indeed, several varieties of form, but all on the same principle, and probably requiring but little difference in the mode of execution.

Their wind-instruments were more numerous; but, from the descriptions which have reached us of some of them, and from what may be collected respecting others from representations in ancient statuary, it is not to be presumed that they possessed the compass and modulation of those with which we are so acquainted. They consisted chiefly of the ancient shepherd's pipe, or *syrinx*;—of various kinds of flutes; which appear, however, to have been usually played with a mouth-piece, or reed, in the manner of our hautboy, and sometimes to have consisted of a double tube;—of horns; of which little more is known than what may be conjectured from the name;—of trumpets of various powers;—and the bag-pipes; with which (although the fact has been disputed) it appears certain that they were acquainted.

They seem also to have made some approach

towards the invention of the organ, in an instrument, of which the following description is extracted from a recent "History of Music," from the pen of Dr. Busby.

"The most extraordinary of the wind instruments, or, indeed, of any other kind, is the *hydraulicon*, or water-organ: an instrument so denominated, because it was performed upon, or at least blown, by water. From a description given by Vitruvius, it would seem, that the water, by which the air was impelled into the pipes, was put in motion by pumps. The question whether it was played with the fingers, or its tones modulated by some mechanical means, has excited considerable dispute. Claudian speaks of it in terms which, if we overlook what alludes to its being filled by water instead of wind, would describe a modern organ:—

*"Vel qui magna levi detrudens murmurata tacta  
Innumeras voces segetis moderator aëne  
Intonet erranti digito, penitusque trabali  
Feste laborantes in carmina concitet undas."*

"With flying fingers, as they lightsome bound,  
From brazen tubes he draws the pealing sound.  
Unnumber'd notes the captive ear surprise,  
And swell and thunder as his art he plies:  
The beamy bar he heaves! the waters wake!  
And liquid fapes liquid music make."

*Busby.*

“Athenæus, who gives a description of this instrument, says it was invented, in the time of the second Ptolemy Evergetes, by Ctésibius, a native of Alexandria. Ctésibius, however, cannot properly be called the inventor of the hydraulic organ, since it is but an improvement upon Plato's *clepsydra*, or water-clock, that played upon flutes the hours of the night, at a time when they could not be seen on the index.

“The most satisfactory idea that can be formed of this instrument, is furnished by a large beautiful medallion of Valentinian, in the collection of antiquities bequeathed to the Vatican by Christina, Queen of Sweden. On the reverse of this relic is represented an *hydraulic organ*, with two men, one on the right, and one on the left, who appear to pump the water which plays, and to be listening to the sound. It has only eight pipes, placed on a round pedestal; and has neither keys nor performers.”

The only other instruments with which they appear to have been acquainted, were the cymbal, and various kinds of drums, one of which seems to have borne a close resemblance to the tambourine.

The dramatic entertainments of the Romans appear to have been always accompanied with

music. They originally, indeed, consisted in little more than dances to the sound of the flute. Dialogue was only gradually introduced: at first, in coarse, and frequently obscene, couplets, which obtained the name of *fescennine verses*, from the name, as it is supposed, of the city whence they originated;<sup>1</sup> afterwards, in satires, still accompanied with music and dancing; and it was not until about the year of Rome 512 that an attempt was made to represent a regular comedy. From this period the drama progressively improved, and the plays which still exist sufficiently attest the excellence to which this species of composition arrived: while the fortunes acquired by some of the actors afford abundant proof of the estimation in which the histrionic art was held, notwithstanding that, according to the Roman law, the profession of an actor was declared infamous, and those who practised it were deprived of the rights of citizens.

<sup>1</sup> “*Fescennine verses*.” The generally received opinion is, that these verses took their name from *Fecennia*, a city of Etruria, now *Galesa*, in the ecclesiastical states. But, according to Macrobius, it is derived from the word *Fascinum*, a charm—and the verses were originally used as a protection against witchcraft.

The Roman comedy was, at first, wholly borrowed from the Greeks, and it was long before the Latin stage could boast of an original composition. When delivered from the trammels of imitation, their plays became more descriptive of Roman character and manners; but it may be doubted whether they did not lose more in purity of taste than they gained in originality, for we find, that the stage degenerated soon after the fall of the republic, and was at length abandoned to dancers and buffoons. The change has, indeed, been ascribed to the policy of the emperors, who are said to have encouraged the representation of low comedy and pantomime, in order to divert the attention of the lower classes of the public from the measures of government: but we may reasonably presume, that it could not have been so easily effected, had not the decline of dramatic genius itself led the way to it.

Tragedy was not introduced, at Rome, until long after comedy was known; and the pieces still extant are so few, as to afford but little means of judging of the general merit of their tragic muse.

The play was usually succeeded by a farce, which was performed by amateurs. These were

styled *Atellane comedies*; in which the actors, not speaking from any written dialogue, trusted to the spontaneous effusion of their own fancy: a licence which they frequently abused by the introduction of much gross ribaldry. The performers in the *Atellana* could not be compelled by the audience to unmask; nor were they, like common actors, deprived of their civil rights.

Interludes, of dancing and processions, of exhibitions of animals<sup>2</sup> and combats of gladiators, were generally introduced between the acts; and these, together with pantomimical representations, tumbling, and rope-dancing, constituted so great a portion of the entertainment, that they at length superseded the regular drama.

The actors wore masks descriptive of the characters they represented. The origin of the custom has been attributed to a celebrated tragedian, who is said to have adopted it to conceal the defect of squinting: but it was, more pro-

<sup>2</sup> "Animals." Whether the animals exhibited on the stage were usually trained to perform tricks, does not distinctly appear; but there is no doubt that the Emperor Galba possessed an elephant which walked upon a rope stretched across the theatre.

ably, borrowed from the Greeks. The interior of the mask was lined with metal, or with horn, in such manner as materially to assist the power of the voice; and its use was rendered in some measure necessary by the vast size of their roofless theatres, in which, without some such assistance, they must have been inaudible to the greater part of the audience. Yet, as they must have been destructive of that great charm of superior acting—the expression of the countenance—it is difficult to imagine how their eminent performers could, while so disguised, have acquired the reputation they enjoyed. We may therefore be allowed to suppose, that the idea of their having been employed on all occasions, is erroneous; and partly to be attributed to a custom which prevailed, of prefixing to the pieces the figure of the mask, together with the *dramatis personæ*, which was, perhaps, intended more as an indication of the character, to the reader, than as a representation of what was actually exhibited on the stage. However this may be, it is certain that they were generally used, at least by inferior actors; and, as the female characters were performed by men, they then contributed to heighten the illusion. In such pieces too as the *Menæchmi* of Plautus

—from which Shakespeare's Comedy of Errors is taken—in which the intricacy of the plot turns on the mistake of one person for another, the use of masks would contribute to give an air of greater probability to the incidents.

Another singular custom prevailed on the Roman stage—the occasional division of the same part between two actors, the one reciting, while the other accompanied him with the appropriate gesture. But it was probably confined to the recitation of verse, or single speeches; for we do not find that it was applied to dialogue; and it was originally introduced for the convenience of a favorite performer who was rendered hoarse by his obedience to reiterated calls of “*encore*.”

Comedians, wore a low-heeled shoe, called a *sock*, that merely covered the foot; Tragedians, a high *buskin* that reached to the mid-leg: whence these words are used to denote the different styles of comedy and tragedy. Pantomimic actors usually performed barefooted; but on some occasions they wore wooden sandals. The professed dancers used castanets, which they played in unison with the music, in the manner still practised in the Peninsula, and some parts of Italy; and it appears, both, that

the chief female dancers were Spaniards, of the province of Andalusia, and, that the style of their dancing was then as remarkable as now for its voluptuousness.

It is generally imagined, that the national dances of Spain were introduced into that country by the Moors; and the certainty, that dances equally licentious have been known time immemorial in the East, has been adduced as proof corroborative of the supposition. But that fact will not apply to Barbary, whence the Moors invaded Spain; nor do the dances of the East bear any resemblance to those of the Peninsula, except in their lasciviousness; while a striking similarity prevails between the latter and the *Salterello*, as danced at this day by the lower classes of people in the Ecclesiastical states. We, therefore, shall not commit any great outrage on probability if we hazard the conjecture, that the same *fandango* and *bolero* which charm the present audiences of Madrid, once contributed to the amusement of the inhabitants of ancient Rome.

The audience testified their applause, or censure, in the modern manner, and espoused the pretensions of different actors with so much heat, that the representation was often inter-

rupted by their disputes, and quarrels ensued which not unfrequently terminated in bloodshed. Such, indeed, was the partiality of the people to theatrical amusements, that every eminent player had his party, and their absurd factions rendered the theatre a constant scene of riot and disorder. Persons of the highest rank took part in these brawls, which were at length carried so far as to attract the attention of the senate; and, in the reign of Tiberius, the players were, in consequence, banished from Italy. The drama never recovered this blow: but dancers and buffoons gradually found means to return to the stage; of which they afterwards kept entire, and undisputed, possession.

The extraordinary, and somewhat ridiculous, influence acquired by the actors, excited the more surprise, as we are told that, although courted by the great, and liberally rewarded by the public,<sup>3</sup> they never were freed from this

“*Liberally rewarded by the public.*” Although it is certain that the principal actors acquired large fortunes, which must have been derived from the public bounty, it yet does not appear in what manner this was bestowed. They probably profited largely by exhibiting their talents at private entertainments. That their public engagements were not very lucrative may be conjectured from the fact,

restraints of the law; which, as has been already observed, held their profession to be infamous; and, indeed, the majority of those who embraced it were slaves. Even Augustus, who was their greatest protector, ordered one celebrated comedian to be publicly whipped through the theatres for having presumed to intrigue with a Roman matron; and banished another from Italy for affronting one of the audience who hissed him.

Scenic exhibitions were, for a long time, held to be subversive of the morals of the people; and, so late as the year of Rome 599, a decree passed the senate prohibiting the erection of theatres within a mile of the city. But this prejudice gave way in process of time, and it is well known upon what a colossal scale of magnificence those edifices were afterwards constructed. The first permanent building erected for this purpose within the city, was calculated to contain 40,000 spectators, and others were afterwards raised of still more stupendous dimensions. They were, at first, open at the top,

that a law was enacted, in the reign of the Emperor M. Antoninus, which limited the rewards usually given to them on extraordinary occasions to ten *aurei*, or about eight guineas.

and awnings were used to guard against the sun and rain ; nor were the audience accommodated with seats ; but, at a later period, they were covered, and built with regular rows of stone benches, rising above each other, and divided according to the rank of those who were to occupy them. The lowest rows were appropriated to the senators and foreign ambassadors, the next fourteen to the knights, and the remainder to the public ; and it appears, that the foremost seats were covered with cushions, while those assigned to the lower classes were left bare. As all were equally admitted gratuitously, these distinctions gave great offence to the people ; and with the greater apparent reason, as they were not observed in the circus : but they were, notwithstanding, rigidly enforced, and inspectors were appointed at the theatres, who regulated the distribution of places according to the rank of the parties. The stage was constructed in much the same manner as at present, except that the orchestra was equally appropriated to dancing and music. The scenery and decorations were generally of the most splendid description, and were screened, during the intervals of the performance, by a silken curtain.

The custom, so general at private entertain-

ments, of sprinkling the apartments, and the guests, with perfume, is alluded to by Ovid as being also usual at the theatres; the magnificence of which he thus contrasts with the rustic simplicity of those of older times:

"No veils were then o'er marble structures spread,  
No liquid odours on the audience shed;  
The nearest grove supplied its choicest green,  
And clustering branches form'd the artless scene;  
Rude seats of turf in order rose around,  
Where sat the swains with oaken garlands crown'd."  
*Gifford, Art of Love, b. i.*

The gladiatorial combats were exhibited in amphitheatres, which had seats all around; the stage being in the centre, and called the *arena* in consequence of its being covered with sand to afford the combatants a firmer footing. The buildings were, at first, mere temporary erections of wood; as the shows were then only occasionally represented; but when these became more frequent, and regular, they were permanently constructed of stone. The largest was that called the *coliseum*: it was 350 feet in length, 470 in breadth, and in height 160; and was surrounded, to the top, by a portico resting on eighty arches, and divided into four stories; all open to the interior front, and the uppermost

entirely exposed to the air. An arcade under each arch afforded a facility of ingress and egress which prevented those accidents that might otherwise have arisen from the pressure of the vast crowds by which it was frequented. The arrangement of the seats was similar to that in the theatres; and, as combats of wild-beasts sometimes formed a part of the amusements, the arena was strongly fenced, and encircled by a canal, to guard the spectators against their attacks: these precautions, however, were not always sufficient, and instances occurred in which the animals sprang across the barrier. This huge pile was reared by Vespasian and Titus, with a portion of the materials, and on the site of, Nero's golden palace; its form was oval, and it is supposed to have contained upwards of eighty thousand persons; a multitude that would stagger belief did not the vast ruins of the antique fabric still sufficiently attest the accuracy of the calculation.

The amphitheatres were never roofed, but they were provided with awnings, and when these were insufficient, the people made use of umbrellas, and broad-brimmed hats, to protect them from the weather.

The gladiators were originally chosen from

among the captives, or malefactors; then slaves were trained to the profession; and, when the encouragement which it afterwards received rendered it lucrative, it was adopted by many free persons. They were largely recompensed for any signal act of bravery, and, when they had particularly distinguished themselves, or had grown old in the service, they were permitted to retire on a pension; but the public favor with which their exertions was rewarded never prevented their employment from being looked upon with abhorrence, and stigmatized with infamy.

They fought with various weapons, and it was customary to oppose those to each other whose arms and manner of engaging were most dissimilar. Some appeared in complete armour, and others were only provided with a trident, and a net in which they endeavoured to entangle their adversary, whom they then instantly slew; if foiled in the attempt, their only resource was in flight, and if overtaken by their opponent before they had adjusted the net for a second cast, their own fate was promptly decided. But when a gladiator was only wounded, he lowered his sword in token of submission, and his doom then depended on the will of the spec-

tators, who pressed down their thumbs if they chose to save him, but held them up if it was their pleasure that he should be slain. Incredible as it may appear, this inhuman signal was very commonly given; always, indeed, if the unfortunate man betrayed either inexpertness or timidity; and it was only when his skill and courage seemed to promise future *sport* that his life was spared. The wretched victim seldom offered further resistance: he was even expected to receive the fatal stroke in a becoming posture; and when killed, or even mortally wounded, he was dragged, with a hook, from the arena, and thrown into a common receptacle for the carcasses of the miserable beings who were thus slaughtered. His opponent was crowned with palm, and cheered by the plaudits of the barbarians, who found diversion in this scene of murder; and who, not content with the sacrifice of one fellow creature, glutted their thirst of blood with repeated combats which lasted from the morning until night. Nor let it be supposed that these brutal exhibitions were confined to the rabble of Rome: the most distinguished among the knights and patricians, the very magistrates and consuls, the emperors themselves, and even females of rank, sanctioned

them by their presence, and joined in the cruel signal of destruction. Nay, so far was the ferocious mania carried, that some of the young nobility actually entered the lists on the arena themselves, and contended, as amateurs, with the common herd of prize-fighters.

The first public combats of gladiators took place at Rome in the close of the fifth century from the foundation of the city, when they were exhibited by two brothers—named Brutus—at the funeral of their father. From that period they became frequent, on such occasions, and in process of time they were introduced into the entertainments given to the people by the magistrates on public festivals, and even by individuals who were desirous of acquiring popularity. At length, they constituted so material a portion of those festivities, that ten thousand gladiators are said to have fought in Rome alone during the celebration of Trajan's triumph over the

The Emperor Gordian, while yet only a private citizen, is said to have presented, on more than one occasion, five hundred pairs of purchased gladiators to the public games.

Where, influenced by the rabble's bloody will,  
With thumbs bent back they popularly kill.  
*Dryden's Juvenal, l. 100.*

Executions; and such was the waste of human life occasioned by these barbarous shows throughout the provinces, that in Europe only, upwards of twenty thousand men have perished by them in one month. Some checks were occasionally imposed on them: first by a law, procured by Cicero, to prevent their being exhibited by any candidate for office, and secondly by an edict of Augustus to confine them to certain periods of the year; but these were afterwards rescinded, and only serve to place in a broader light the sanguinary disposition of the people for whom such restraints were necessary. They were prohibited during the reign of Constantine: but so strong was the predilection of the public in their favor, that neither the mandate of the Emperor, nor the introduction of Christianity, could entirely suppress them, until the irruption of the Goths, under Alaric, put a stop to every species of diversion throughout Italy. Thus during the space of nearly seven centuries, were these inhuman spectacles suffered to corrupt and brutalize the manners of the people; and, in the polished capital of the civilized world, multitudes of human beings were sacrificed to a depravity of taste which has no parallel in the annals of savage nations.

Of the combats of wild-beasts little more is known than, that vast numbers of different animals, both foreign and domestic, were thus destroyed: eleven thousand are said to have been killed during the celebration of Trajan's triumph, to which allusion has been already made, and five hundred lions, in a few days, on another similar occasion.

We should feel disposed to doubt the possibility of collecting together such vast numbers of those animals, did we not recollect the wide extent of African territory that was tributary to the Romans after the subjugation of Carthage, the arid wastes of which were only inhabited by wild beasts; and were we not acquainted with the fact that, during the reign of the emperor Commodus, lions were protected as royal game, and whoever killed one, although in self-defence, was subject to a heavy penalty. But Commodus was a sportsman of no common order, and if we may credit the records of his feats in the arena, was, alone, equal to the destruction of the whole tenants of a forest.

Such was the spirit engendered by the scenes of blood with which the people were familiarized, that malefactors, and unfortunate Christians, during the period of the persecution against

them, were compelled to risk their lives in those unequal contests. And in the time of Nero, Christians were dressed in skins, and, thus disguised, were forced to contend with dogs, and other ferocious animals, by which they were devoured. Without positive evidence, it would be unjust to rank among the amusements of the Roman people, an atrocity, from the very contemplation of which the mind recoils with horror; but we have the undoubted authority of Tacitus for the fact, that these, and even greater cruelties, were committed; and a passage in Juvenal—though variously interpreted—seems to warrant the conclusion that the arenæ of the amphitheatres were the polluted scenes of their consummation.<sup>5</sup>

There were also aquatic theatres, termed *Naumachiae*,—the centre of which presented, in lieu of an arena, a spacious pool—where naval

<sup>5</sup> “*Scenes of their consummation.*” Tacitus, speaking of the cruelties inflicted on the Christians by Nero, says, that they were not only clothed in skins and then hunted by dogs, but smeared with some inflammable substance and burned as torches during the night. His words are :—“*et pereuntibus addita ludibria, ut ferarum tergis coniecti laniatu canum interirant, aut crucibus affixi, aut flammandi, atque, ubi deficiisset dies, in usum nocturni*

engagements were exhibited. But the mimic representation of a battle, and the mere semblance of bloodshed, could not satisfy the prevailing passion for the horrible, and in these also the devoted actors were constrained to oppose each other in mortal strife.

*luminis urerentur.* Ann. l. xv. c. 41, and in another part he says, that this took place in the circus.

The passage in Juvenal, to which allusion has been made, is as follows:—

*Pone Tigellinum, lædâ lucebis in illa,  
Quid stantes ardent, qui flæo gutture fumant,  
Et Jædæ meridianæ Satoni diducunt Arundin.*

and has been thus translated:—

“But let great Tigellinus be his theme;  
Then shall he, smear’d with pitch, and wrapp’d in fire,  
In fierce convulsions, at the stake expire;  
Or, thro’ the furrow’d sand, be dragg’d to doom,  
Of Beasts the prey, to please the mob of Rome!”

Owen.

“But glance at Tigellinus, and you shine,  
Chain’d to a stake; in pitchy robes, and night  
Lugubrous torch, the deepening shades of night;  
Or, writhing on a hook, are dragg’d around,  
And, with your mangled members, plough the ground.”

Clifford.

It will be perceived, that neither of these translations convey the literal meaning of the original; nor indeed

would that be possible, as it can only be understood by inference, and even the Latin text is subject to various readings. But they are selected from a great number, in order to show the impression under which they were written; and although they do not expressly assign the amphitheatre as the scene, yet both the learned translators admit, in their notes, that such was their construction of the passage. It is not, indeed, easy to ascribe, with any degree of probability, another meaning to the word *arena*, which, it must be observed, was universally used synonymously with amphitheatre.

## CHAP. XV.

Male Attire.—The Toga.—The Virile-Robe.—The Tunic.—Linen.—Hats and Caps.—Drawers.—Stockings.—Sandals.—Buskins.—Gloves.—Mode of Wearing the Hair and Beard.—Wigs.—Ear-rings.—Seals.—Rings.—Ornaments of Senators and Knights.—Military Uniform.

THE original dress of the Romans, of both sexes, was the *toga*. It was a round and ample robe, open in front to the waist, but closed at the bottom, and without sleeves. It envelopped the whole body; and, leaving the right arm at liberty, was drawn over the left shoulder, on which it was gathered into a knot, from which a large lappet fell over the breast, on which it was so arranged as to form a kind of pocket. It was formed of woollen cloth, the quality and size of which varied as taste or circumstances directed. Horace represents a rich man as seriously admonishing one of more slender revenue not to attempt to vie with him in the size of his robe; and he exclaims with indignation against an upstart who displayed his

wealth in a toga of six ells.<sup>1</sup> It was worn in various folds over the arm and upon the breast, and their arrangement appears to have been an object of no common attention: indeed, of such importance were these graces considered, that the learned Quintilian explains, at considerable length, the manner in which a barrister should display his robe, so as to increase the effect of his pleading; and the orator Hortensius, when consul, made a public, and serious, complaint to the judges, of his colleague in office, for having pressed against him in a narrow passage, and deranged the folds of his dress.

The form of the toga was the same for every condition of citizen, and the colour generally adopted was plain white; but the latter was varied, in some instances, and ornaments were added according to the rank of the wearer. Thus, that which was worn by generals, when they entered Rome in triumph, was a tissue of purple and embossed gold, with an embroidery of palm leaves; and that used by the knights, at their general review, in the ides of July, was of purple striped with scarlet and white, which had formerly been the habit of the ancient

<sup>1</sup> *Horat. Epist.* l. i. ep. 18.—*Epod.* ep. 4.

kings: The sacerdotal and magisterial toga, was bordered with purple: this was called the *prætextan-robe*, and it was also worn, by young persons of family, with the addition of a golden ball upon the breast, pendent from a collar. They took it at twelve years of age, previous to which they were clothed in a vest with sleeves: girls wore it until they were married; boys, until they were invested with the virile-robe.

The investiture of the *toga-virilis* was a ceremony of great solemnity, as well as festivity. The friends and relatives of the youth being assembled on the occasion, he was stripped of the *prætextan-robe*, and the golden ball was consecrated to the Lares. He was then clothed in a toga of pure white, without ornament, and conducted by the whole company, followed by the servants and retainers of his house and near connexions, to the capitol, where prayers and sacrifices were offered to the gods. Thence he was taken, with the same parade, to the Forum, to make his public entry into the world on that spot where probably the most important scenes of his future life were to be acted. After which the day was concluded with a feast, to which the dependants of the family were admitted, and presents were distributed among the guests.

During the early period of the republic, young men were not allowed to take the virile-robe until the completion of their seventeenth year. But the indulgence of parents afterwards relaxed this rule, and, under the emperors, it was frequently granted to boys of more tender age: Augustus gave it to his grandsons in their fifteenth year, and Nero was only fourteen when he received it from Claudius. Although it was viewed as the distinctive sign of manhood, and those who adopted it were from that time admitted into the society of men, yet they were only considered as entering upon a novitiate, which did not entitle them to the privileges of that rank until more mature experience gave them a better claim to the distinction: whence they were called *Tyros*,<sup>2</sup> which was the name applied to the cadets of the army, and to soldiers during their first campaign, and is still used by us in a similar, though more general, sense.

The colour of the common toga being white, and the stuff woollen, they were, necessarily, cleansed by fullers; and as that operation required more frequent repetition than was some-

<sup>2</sup> "*Tyros*," Lat. *Tirones*.

times convenient, they were not always of the most delicate appearance. But on festivals, it was otherwise: and those who aspired to employments in the State, made a point of appearing in robes of resplendent whiteness, which was heightened by the application of chalk. Their superior lustre obtained for these, the distinctive appellation of *togæ candidæ*, and for those who wore them, that of *candidati*, which has descended to modern competitors for office.

When citizens, accused of any crime, were summoned to appear before the Judges, both they, and their relations and clients, all appeared in old and soiled robes, in order to excite compassion. It was also usual for all persons to dress thus in times of public calamity. But this must not be confounded with the family mourning, which was black, or, according to some authors, iron-grey.

Every Roman citizen had a right to wear the toga: it was, nevertheless, considered as a dress of ceremony, and, in some measure, as a mark of superiority; and the lower classes seldom wore more than the tunic, or underdress. It was also usual to throw it aside in the house, and it was rarely worn in the coun-

try; but in the city, and in all public places, it would have been deemed indecorous in any one above the rank of a plebeian, to appear without it; and in foreign countries, it was worn as a distinction. Indeed, so much importance did the Romans attach to it, that exiles were deprived of the right to wear it during the term of their banishment. Germanicus having appeared without it, in Egypt, was reprimanded by Tiberius for the neglect, as a want of respect to the customs of his country: as Scipio Africanus had been, by his fellow citizens, for a similar omission at Syracuse.

But, under the Emperors, the toga began to fall into disuse: already, in the reign of Augustus, the middle classes wore it no longer, or those who continued it generally appeared with a cloak over it. Augustus was indignant at the innovation, and gave orders that no citizen should be allowed to enter the circus, or the forum, but in a toga alone: but convenience prevailed over his commands, and both the use of the cloak became very general, and its ornaments very splendid. Hadrian, also, endeavoured to enforce the continuance of the toga, and required of the senators and knights that they should never appear abroad

without it: he himself setting the example, by constantly wearing it, even at table, although that was contrary to established usage. Notwithstanding these efforts in favor of the ancient costume, few, except the great, and their immediate dependants, retained the use of it after this period; and the caprices of taste and fashion, aided by an extended intercourse with foreign nations, contributed, afterwards, to the introduction of various changes in their dress, which it would be both tedious and uninteresting to describe.

There was one peculiarity attending the toga, which, however, deserves notice:—it was fashioned in the loom, and was so nearly ready for use when it left the hands of the weaver, that when once the seam was fastened which connected it at the bottom, it required no further attention from the tailor. Of the exact quality of the materials of which it was formed, we are necessarily ignorant; but it appears, that the Romans were not acquainted with those modern means of dressing cloth which consist in shearing and pressing; and to which it owes much of its present elegance.

Both men and women wore a close woollen vest—called a *tunic*—underneath the toga; but

with this difference, at first, that those of the men reached only to the knees, while those worn by the women fell to their feet, and had sleeves; which would, then, have been considered an effeminacy in men; although, at a later period, they were universally adopted: the dress was, indeed, altogether unknown to their ancestors, who, in the early ages, wore no other covering than the toga. The tunic was fastened round the waist with a girdle, which served also as a purse, and it was considered slovenly to appear in public without it. Under this outer tunic, most people wore another of a lighter texture, which served them in lieu of a shirt; but this also was woollen; for it was not until the time of the Emperors that linen was introduced. It was first brought from Egypt, and whether from its coarseness, or its rarity, made its way but slowly into public estimation; and so little were its real qualities understood, or appreciated, that, even in the third century, it was usually interwoven with stripes of purple and gold-thread, by which its softness was entirely destroyed.

The Romans did not usually wear hats: not that their use was unknown; or that they were unprovided with them; for they had various

kinds of both hats and caps; but it was only customary to wear them on journies, or at the public games; and, in the city, they usually went bareheaded, or covered themselves with a corner of the toga. When they began to wear a covering on the legs, they, in lieu of stockings, wore bandages of cloth or linen; but even this indulgence was looked upon as effeminate, and could only be excused on the plea of illness. Neither did they wear breeches;<sup>3</sup> but with the military dress, and when riding, they used tight drawers, which did not reach to the knee. It was, doubtless, in allusion to this want of an under covering, that Cæsar is represented as arranging his robe at the moment of his assassination,—“that he might fall with decency.”

On the feet, both men and women wore, either sandals,—which were shoe soles fastened with thongs of leather across the foot; or buskins, reaching nearly to the calf, and open in front from the instep upwards, where they were laced close to the leg: the shoe-part

<sup>3</sup> “*Breeches*” were adopted, at a later period, in imitation of the Gauls. There is an edict of the emperor Honorius, prohibiting the use of foreign dresses, among which they are mentioned.

terminated in a point which bent upwards. Cork soles and high heels were general: nor was the fashion confined to the ladies: the priests always wore them: on the stage also, and in public ceremonies, when an extraordinary degree of dignity was assumed, they were commonly used; and even Augustus condescended to add to his stature by these means. The buskins were, at first, made of undressed leather; then, of fine skins of different kinds; afterwards, of woollen, linen, and even silk of different colours; and finally, they were decorated with embroidery. Persons of patrician rank wore an ornament, of silver, on the instep, in the form of a crescent; and the buskins of senators were always black,

It has been doubted whether the Romans wore gloves: they are, however, alluded to by various ancient authors, and the younger Pliny expressly mentions them.\* But there is one appendage to modern dress, so indispensable to delicacy, that it is difficult to conceive how it could have been overlooked; and yet it nowhere appears that they were acquainted with the use of the pocket-hand-kerchief. Some men

\* *Plin. Epist. l. iii. ep. 5.*

of distinction, indeed, but chiefly barristers, wore, pendent from the neck, a long slip of linen—called a *Sudarium*: but this was only used, as it's name implied, to wipe perspiration from the face; and could not, from the situation in which it was worn, have been employed for any less delicate purpose.

During the early ages of the commonwealth the Romans allowed their hair and beards to grow, merely clipping them occasionally as necessity required. The custom of shaving was not introduced until the middle of the fifth century, when, as we are told by Livy,<sup>5</sup> barbers were first brought from Sicily. After that period, it became fashionable to wear the hair short, curled, and perfumed with the greatest care, and the beard close shaved, until the time of Hadrian, who, to hide some excrescences on his chin, revived the habit of wearing the beard: but it was dropped soon afterwards, and was never resorted to except in time of mourning, when it was customary to let both the hair and beard grow.

Young persons, of both sexes, wore the hair twisted into a knot on the crown of the head;

<sup>5</sup> *Tit. Liv.* l. v. c. 41.

but when boys took the toga, it was cut short, and part was thrown into the fire in honor of Apollo, part into the water as an offering to Neptune. The first clippings of the beard were preserved with much care, and consecrated to some divinity: there was no fixed period for this solemnity, but whenever it occurred, it was a day of great ceremony and rejoicing.

It is well known that the ancient philosophers allowed their beards to grow; less, at first, through affectation than indifference; but in time, they preserved them as a mark of gravity and wisdom, and a long beard became so essential an appendage to philosophic dignity, that Lucian mentions one of them, who, being a candidate for a professor's chair, was considered incompetent to fill it on account of the scantiness of the honors of his chin.

Baldness was looked upon as a deformity, and to conceal it, wigs were invented about the time of the first emperors. We are told, that Otho had a kind of scalp of fine leather, with locks of hair upon it so well arranged as to appear natural: yet Domitian, who reigned some years after him, did not find means to hide his want of hair, though so mortified by it that he could not bear to hear the subject of

baldness mentioned. The chevalier Folard asserts,—in his notes on Polybius,—<sup>6</sup> that wigs were in use before the time of Hannibal; and he cites a passage, from that author, not only to prove, that Hannibal wore one himself, but to infer, from the manner in which the fact is related, that it was not then considered a novelty. However that may be, it is certain, that the custom was not introduced into Rome until the period already mentioned. It is, indeed, apparent, that it was unknown in the time of Julius Cæsar: for, it is well understood, that he valued his crown of laurels, more as a covering for his baldness, than for the honor it conferred; and it may fairly be presumed, that if wigs had been generally worn, he would not have neglected so easy a method of concealing it.

Cæsar was, notwithstanding, a remarkably handsome man: tall, and well made, of an open countenance, fair complexion, and fine dark eyes of great vivacity; and he was by no means inattentive to heighten these advantages by those of dress. Contrary to general custom, he wore a flowing tunic which fell down to his feet, with sleeves which reached to the hands, and were

<sup>6</sup> B. iii. ch. 16.

edged with fringe; and, in his youth, he set the fashion of wearing ear-rings, which was previously confined to females, and to slaves, who were chiefly distinguished in that manner from freemen: it continued to be general, among young men of family, until the time of Alexander Severus, who, himself adhering closely to a manly simplicity of dress, abolished this effeminate foppery.

A plain ring, of iron or gold according to their rank, was, during a long period, the only ornament worn by the men: the former belonged to the Plebeians. The golden ring was, originally, an honorary distinction peculiar to knights and senators; but, in time, it became common to all Roman citizens, and was even conferred by some of the emperors on their freed-men. This ring was worn on the third finger of the left hand, and it became usual to mount it with an engraved stone,<sup>7</sup> which served

<sup>7</sup> “*Engraved Stone.*” The art of engraving on fine stones is one of very high antiquity. Lapidaries are mentioned, in the Old Testament, as exercising it in Egypt previous to the flight of the Israelites—*Exodus*, ch. xxviii. v. 9, 11.—and signets are mentioned as in use at the same time.

M. de la Condamine mentions his having seen a corne-

at once as seal and signature: it was in this manner affixed to their public acts, and their letters were merely sealed with it without being signed. The custom was of the remotest antiquity: Cicero mentions it as still existing in his time; and the method of signing the name was not introduced until the accession of the emperors.

Rings, thus mounted, were engraved with various figures, and emblematical devices: Mæcenas had a frog; Augustus a sphynx; and Otho a dog on the prow of a ship. But these were not what we term armorial bearings; which were unknown to the Romans—unless, indeed, the national eagle might be so considered—and do not appear to have become hereditary in families until after the first crusade.

Once the fashion of wearing rings was generally introduced, it was carried, like most others at Rome, to an absurd extreme: they were worn on all the fingers, which were rather

lian in the cabinet of Baron Stoch, at Florence, that was supposed to be as old as the time ascribed to the Trojan war; and which contained, on a surface not larger than a common seal, the figures of the seven heroes of the Theban war, with their names in Greek. See, *Mem. de l'Acad. Paris*, 1757.

loaded than ornamented with them, and they were changed according to the season,—those for the winter being heavy and splendid, and for the summer, light and less costly.

Senators and knights were also decorated with an ornament of purple on the breast of the tunic: it was called *clavus*: and as that of the senators was broader than that of the knights, the tunic of the former was termed *laticlavus*, of the latter, *angusticlavus*. Commentators are not agreed in their description of this badge of distinction; or even whether it was not an entire garment; but it is generally supposed to have merely consisted in one or more stripes of embroidery. From the reign of Augustus, the sons of senators were allowed to wear the *laticlave*, along with the virile robe.

The military uniform, of the generals, was an open scarlet<sup>s</sup> mantle,—termed *chlamys*—thrown

<sup>s</sup> “*Scarlet.*” Although the word scarlet be employed, yet it must only be understood to mean a red colour, probably far from possessing the brilliancy of the modern dye known by that name. We, indeed, possess no certain information respecting the preparation of the Roman scarlet; but many circumstances lead to the conclusion that it was imperfect. It should also be understood, that the colour usually denominated purple by the Romans, was rather dark red of various shades, and violet, than the tint known by that name at present.

over the tunic, and fastened upon the right shoulder. On their departure to join the army, they went, clothed in this robe, to the Capitol, to offer up their vows to the gods; but on their return, they entered the city clad only in the toga. Both officers and soldiers wore, over the cuirass, a loose upper coat, closed in the front with clasps: it was called *sagum*, and was generally adopted by the citizens, also, in times of public commotion. But during peace, the military habit was entirely laid aside, except by those employed on active service; and offensive weapons of every kind were prohibited in Rome.

The dress and arms of the soldiery were as various as the duties in which they were engaged: but an account of them, or of the organization of the army, does not come within the scope or intent of this brief narrative.

## CHAP. XVI.

**Female Dress.**—Simplicity of the ancient Style, and progressive Change.—Attendants.—The Dressing-room.—Mirrors.—Head-dresses.—Powder.—Cosmetics.—Arts of the Toilet.—The Tunic.—The Stola.—Corsets.—Mantles.—Materials of Dress.—Silk.—Muslin.—Colours.—Shoes and Buskins.—Jewelry.

WHILE the Romans were confined to a frugal and laborious life, it may naturally be supposed, that their wives partook of their cares, and were restrained to great simplicity of dress and manners. Even at a later period, ladies of the first distinction were occupied in household duties, and the superintendence of their slaves and families: nor was the celebrated Cornelia—the daughter of the great Scipio, and the mother of the Gracchi—who, when asked to show her jewels, presented her children, a singular instance of the domestic affections triumphing over the love of parade and dress. But when the men resigned the dignified plainness of their ancient manners for the foreign innovations of soppery and effeminate refine-

ment, it may also be imagined, that the women were not slow in following their example.

The Roman ladies usually bathed at an earlier hour than the men.<sup>1</sup> Like them, they generally made use of the public thermæ, and even occasionally practised some of the athletic exercises to which such places were adapted. But they were attended, on those occasions, by their own servants, and, as the baths afforded the convenience of private apartments, they sometimes made use of them for all the purposes of the toilet.

Ladies of distinction had numerous female attendants, to each of whom a separate department was assigned: thus, one was the hair-dresser, another had the care of the wardrobe, a third of the perfumes and paint, while a fourth adjusted the robes; and, instead of the

<sup>1</sup> "*The Roman ladies usually bathed at an earlier hour than the men.*" This would appear to be contradicted by a passage in the celebrated sixth satire of Juvenal, in which a lady is accused of keeping her company waiting supper while she was at the bath; and even of being assisted by the common male attendant of the thermes. There are also instances of females bathing at the same time with men: but the usual practice was as stated in the text.

indiscriminate appellation of waiting-maid, they were each distinguished by the name of their employment. There was, also, a superior order, who formed the privy council of the dressing-room, and whose only duty was, to assist at the deliberations on the important business of decoration, and to decide on the contending claims of rival fashions. This cabinet was composed of the female parasites who attached themselves to women of rank; and, if we may credit the poets, their office was far from being a sinecure. Juvenal, very ungallantly, accuses the ladies of his day of occasional fits of spleen, which, he says, they sometimes vented on their attendants; and even more than hints, that these little petulancies were, in some instances, provoked by the apprehension of being too late to attend the temple of Isis—a convenient goddess who presided over the mysteries of the rendezvous—or by embarrassments thrown in their way by the surly jealousy of ill-bred husbands: and his translators have rather heightened than softened the colours of the scene depicted by the Roman poet.\* But whatever truth there may have

\* See the Sixth Satire of Juvenal.

best in the original picture, should, in candour, be attributed to the prevalence of slavery, which, by presenting human nature in a state of moral debasement, and affording constant opportunities for the exercise of uncontrolled dominion, must have insensibly led to impatience of contradiction, and irritability of temper.

There is no account, in any of the ancient authors, of the interior arrangements of the ladies' dressing-rooms. Nor, however minute the descriptions which have been recorded of the separate parts of their customary apparel, is it possible to follow them through all the revolutions of fashion, or to form more than a general idea of their united appearance. The same desire to please which actuates the modern belle; no doubt influenced the Roman beauty; for time and place make no other difference in a passion that has ever been the same, than in the manner of its display. We may therefore conclude, that the mysteries of the toilet, in all their refinement, were not unknown in ancient Rome; and, indeed, some details which have been preserved, seem to prove, that if they were not as well understood, they were at least as sedulously attended to, then, as now.

The dressing-table appears to have been provided with all its usual appendages, except that useful little modern instrument—the pin. But its inseparable ornament, the mirror, did not possess the advantage of being formed of glass, in lieu of which plates of polished metal were substituted. That looking-glasses were wholly unknown, has indeed been doubted, on the authority of an ancient author,<sup>3</sup> who certainly distinctly alludes to their having been made in Egypt. But, although various articles of glass are enumerated among costly pieces of Roman furniture, mirrors are only mentioned among plate; and no distinct account of the modern invention occurs until the thirteenth century. Those anciently in use, are supposed to have been generally of pure silver, although they are known to have been also composed of mixed metal: they were kept in cases to preserve their polish, and were often sufficiently large to reflect the entire figure.

No other head-dress was worn than the hair variously arranged and ornamented; except,

<sup>3</sup> "Ancient Author." *Plin. Hist. Nat.* l. xxxvi. c. 25.  
See also, *Caylus, Recueil d'Antiquités*—and *Beckmann's Hist. of Inventions*, art. *Mirrors*.

indeed, that, at one time, a cap, in the form of a mitre, was in vogue; but it soon fell into disuse with all but women of an abandoned character. The combs were of ivory, or box, and sometimes of metal; and a heated wire was used, round which the hair was curled into the required form. The most usual was to plait, and roll it as a bandeau round the head, on the crown of which it was fastened in a knot; and it became fashionable to raise these tresses so high, that they were heaped upon each other until they were reared into a kind of edifice of many stages, where—

“ With curls on curls, like diff’rent stories rise  
Her towering locks, a structure to the skies.”

*Owen's Juvenal, sat. vi.*

False hair was then had recourse to; which at length assumed the form of a wig; and, at one time, it was the mode to dress it in imitation of a military casque. The curls were confined with small chains, or rings, of gold, and bodkins studded with precious stones. Fillets of purple, or white, riband, ornamented with pearls, were also worn on the head, and splendid jewels in the ears. There were some decorations for the head which were considered peculiarly

indicative of female decorum : such was a plain broad riband with which some matrons tressed their hair ; others appertained exclusively to particular families ; but it is probable that these distinctions were soon lost, or confounded in the maze of fashion. During the early part of the commonwealth, ladies never appeared abroad without a veil ; but it was gradually laid aside as the reserve of their manners declined, and was eventually only used for mere ornament, or convenience.

Fair hair was the most esteemed, and both men and women used to stain it with a flaxen dye. Various essences were used to perfume and give it lustre, and, sometimes, it was powdered with gold dust to render it still more resplendent. This latter mode came from Asia : Josephus says, that it was practised by the Jews : some of the emperors adopted it ; and the hair of Commodus is said to have become so fair and bright by its constant use, that, when the sun shone upon it, his head appeared as if on fire. But the powder used by the moderns was unknown to the ancients : their authors do not mention it ; and the reverend fathers of the Church make no allusion to it amongst all the means which they reproach the

women with having adopted to heighten their charms; neither do the old romances, which yet give such minute details respecting dress; nor is it seen in any of the antique portraits, although the painters of those days usually copied the dress and ornaments as actually worn.

If the hair exacted such attention, it may be presumed that the face was not neglected; and, indeed, we read of almost as many cosmetics as fill the columns of a modern newspaper. To enumerate them all, would be as endless, as it probably would be but little instructive to the very able professors in the mysterious and important arts of personal embellishment of which the present age can boast; but one precious receipt from the pen of the bard who sung "the Art of Love," cannot, it is presumed, be, even now, wholly uninteresting to the accomplished votaress of the toilet who may deign to honor these pages with a perusal:—

"Vetches, and beaten barley let them take,  
And with the whites of eggs a mixture make;  
Then dry the precious paste with sun and wind,  
And into powder very gently grind.  
Get hart's-horn next, but let it be the first  
That creature sheds, and beat it well to dust;

Six pounds in all; then mix, and sift them well,  
 And think the while how fond Narcissus fell :  
 Six roots to you that pensive flow'r must yield,  
 To mingle with the rest, well bruis'd, and cleanly peel'd.  
 Two ounces next of gum, and thural seed,  
 And let a double share of honey last succeed.—  
 With this, whatever damsel paints her face,  
 Will brighter than her glass see every grace.

*Ovid: Art of Beauty—Anonym.*

Pliny speaks of a wild vine, with very thick leaves of a pale green, the seeds of the grape of which were red, and being bruised with the leaves, were used to refresh the complexion. Fabula, says Martial, feared the rain on account of the chalk upon her face, and Sabella, the sun, because of the ceruse with which she was painted. The same author mentions a depilatory which was employed to eradicate obnoxious hairs: and Plantus alludes to the use of rouge. Many ladies used to wash themselves in asses milk; and the celebrated Poppæa, the wife of Nero, bathed daily in it. This lady, we are told, invented an unctuous paste which was in universal esteem as a softener of the skin: it was spread over the face as a mask, and was very generally and constantly worn in the house; thus creating a kind of domestic countenance

for the husband, while that underneath was carefully preserved for the more favored admirer, or the public.

The Roman ladies were extremely careful of their teeth : they used small brushes, and tooth-picks : the latter sometimes of silver ; but those most esteemed were made of the wood of the mastich tree. Of what, besides water, they employed to cleanse them, we only know, that there was a favourite lotion, which they received from Spain, the chief ingredient in which was a liquid that undoubtedly would not recommend it to modern notice. False teeth are mentioned by both Horace and Martial, as being common in their time.

Art had not, indeed, then arrived at the perfection of supplying the absolute deficiency of an eye ; but means were not wanting to increase their lustre, and to make those which were small, or sunk, appear larger and more prominent than they really were. This was effected by burning the powder of antimony, the vapour of which being allowed to ascend to the eyes, had the effect of distending the eyelids ; or the powder, and sometimes, indeed, common soot, was gently spread with a bodkin underneath the lid, and the tint which it im-

parted was supposed to give an expression of liquid softness to the eye. Pencilling the eye-brows was a constant practice; nor was there any ignorance of the effect produced by a skilfully disposed patch,<sup>4</sup> or of any other of the numerous arcana by which the charms of the person are heightened and displayed. Ovid, whose authority on such a subject can no more be questioned than his tenderness towards the sex, can be suspected, says, that—

“ Women, with juice of herbs grey looks disguise,  
And art gives colour which with nature vies :  
The well-wove tours they wear their own are thought,  
But only are their own as what they’ve bought.  
They know the use of white to make them fair,  
And how with red lost colour to repair ;  
Imperfect eye-brows they by art can mend,  
And skin when wanting o’er a scar extend.  
Nor need the fair one be ashamed, who tries,  
By art, to add new lustre to her eyes.”

Congreve : *Art of Love*, b. ii.

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<sup>4</sup> *A skilfully disposed patch.* It has been doubted whether the Roman ladies did actually employ the “artillery of patches.” But not only are they repeatedly mentioned in Martial’s Epigrams, but the younger Pliny tells us, that even a grave lawyer had recourse to their aid, and that, according as he was to plead for plaintiff or defendant, he used to wear a white, or a black patch, over the right or the left eye ! *Plin. Epist.* l. vi. ep. 2.

It has been already observed, that the tunic, as well as the toga, was common to both sexes, with the exception of a slight difference in the shape of the former. In the early ages, women wore the tunic so high about the throat, and it descended so low, that the figure of the wearer was entirely concealed, and to expose it would have been considered a departure from feminine reserve and delicacy. But it gradually became customary to display more and more of the neck, until the tunic was worn in such manner that the left sleeve only was fastened over the shoulder, while the right fell negligently down upon the arm; and some merely closed the front of the sleeves with clasps, instead of seams, so that the arms were barely covered, but not concealed. This robe was confined round the waist with a broad embroidered girdle, and it was considered graceful to slightly raise the right side of it when walking. At first, one tunic only was worn; but the example of the men introduced the fashion of wearing three; the under one as a chemise, the next as a short frock, and the upper in the manner already described. The latter acquired, in the course of time, so many folds, and such various ornaments, that it at length entirely superseded the

toga,<sup>5</sup> and became the chief female habiliment under the new title of the *stola*. It then received a train, with a deep border of gold and purple tissue, and was closed in front from the girdle downwards; the upper part was left open to display the second tunic, over which young persons wore ribands crossed upon the breast to support the bosom. These gradually assumed the form of the *corset*, and of all the apparel of a Roman lady it became the most brilliant: it was resplendent with gold, pearls, and precious stones; and even females of inferior rank, who could not command those ornaments, yet wore a stomacher of coarse embroidery.<sup>6</sup> Over the *stola*, there was thrown a mantle, attached merely to the shoulders with a clasp, and falling thence upon the ground with a sweeping train: it was generally worn with an inclination to the left shoulder, in order to give more liberty, and

<sup>5</sup> "*Toga*." The female toga was afterwards worn only by women of profligate manners. Those convicted of adultery were forced to appear in it as a mark of public disgrace.

<sup>6</sup> "*Stomacher of coarse embroidery*." It is remarkable, that this part of the ancient female costume, and a very close imitation of the *stola* also, are yet preserved in the dress of the peasantry in the vicinity of Rome.

perhaps more grace, to the right arm; it thus formed several folds, which, together with its vast length, gave it an appearance of great dignity.

The clothes were made of various materials; of woollen-cloth, linen, and silk; but the most usual was a mixture of silk and wool. During nearly the whole period of the republic, both linen and pure-wove-silk were unknown. The rarity of the latter, even during the reigns of many of the emperors, was such, that Aurelian is said to have refused a mantle of silk to the Empress because of its extravagant price; and it appears, that raw silk was then, in the latter end of the third century, of the same value, weight for weight, as gold. The Romans were indeed, for a long time, ignorant of the manner in which silk was produced; and the silk-worm was not known in Europe until the middle of the sixth century. What silk they had was procured from China, through the medium of their commerce with Arabia, and the East Indies; and in the then imperfect state of mercantile intercourse, it was obtained with difficulty, and was, consequently, so exorbitantly dear, as to place it, in its pure state, beyond the reach of all but persons of the highest rank.

Wherefore, a large portion of what was received in a manufactured state, was unravelled, and re-wove, with an intermixture of wool, into a stuff of a very slight texture, and transparent appearance, which was usually worn by ladies of the middle class of society, and, on ordinary occasions, even by women of distinction.

A modern commentator,<sup>7</sup> whose opinion is entitled to great attention, hazards the conjecture, that the Roman ladies were also provided with muslin from the East Indies, and applies to it some lines of an ancient poet, quoted by Seneca, who indignantly exclaims—

“A woven wind should married women wear,  
And naked in a linen cloud appear.”

But he does not take upon him to determine that it actually was muslin which thus excited the spleen of the moralist; and the term “woven-wind,”<sup>8</sup> was often, poetically, applied to any stuff of a thin texture.

<sup>7</sup> “*A modern commentator.*” Gifford, notes to the translation of Juvenal, sat. ii. ver. 99.

<sup>8</sup> “*Woven wind.*” This, and synonymous terms, are frequently applied in ancient authors to the silk and woollen stuffs alluded to in the text. Pliny says, they were so thin that the body shone through them. (*Hist. Nat.* l. vi. c. 20.)

White was the only colour originally worn; it was also considered, for a long time, as more elegant than any other except purple, by which the dignitaries of the state were distinguished. But fashion afterwards introduced a greater variety, and the ladies being no longer bound by any rule except its capricious dictates, seem to have indulged their taste in all the tints of the rainbow; although the different shades of purple appear to have been always held in superior estimation.

Notwithstanding this inconstancy in the colour

Tibullus calls them *vestes pellucidæ*, and Petronius, *ventus textilis*. It, however, is by no means improbable, that manufactured cotton, as well as silk, was imported into Rome from the East; and a passage in the Georgics of Virgil, which evidently alludes to the cotton-plant, tends to confirm Mr. Gifford's opinion, that it was obtained from the country of the *Seres*, from which the stuff, called *Serica*, which he supposes to have been muslin, was named:—

“ *Quid nemora Æthiopum, molli canentia lani,  
Velleraque ut foliis depectant tenuia seres.*”

“ Of Æthiops' hoary trees and woolly wood,  
Let others tell: and how the *Seres* spin  
Their fleecy forests in a slender twine.”

Dryden, *Georg.* ii.

of the robes, that of the shoes and buskins remained, during a considerable period, uniformly white: it was not until the reign of Aurelian that women began to wear them of red; for which that Emperor not only gave them a special permission, but at the same time deprived the men of that privilege, which he reserved to the ladies and himself. His successors followed his example, and it has been continued even to the present day; for it was from the emperors of the west that the Popes received the custom, by which they are still distinguished, of wearing red shoes. Women also wore slippers and socks; but the latter were merely ribands bound over the feet; the colour was usually red, and they appeared through the opening of the buskin, which was itself laced with a garter crossed several times upon the leg. The emperors loaded their buskins with ornaments, one of which was the figure of an eagle in embroidery enriched with pearls and diamonds, and there is reason to suppose, that this also was adopted by ladies.

The taste for jewelry was likewise displayed in bracelets, necklaces, and every kind of female ornament. Indeed, the use of jewels was so general, that Pliny says, it would have been

considered derogatory to a female of rank to have appeared without them; and he estimates those worn in full dress by Lollia Paulina—the repudiated wife of Caligula—and belonging to her in her own right, as inherited from her family, without including either state-jewels or presents from the prince, at a sum equivalent to more than *three hundred thousand pounds of our money.*<sup>9</sup>

Notwithstanding this prodigality of expense, the Romans do not appear to have been acquainted with the art that gives value to our most precious gem: they, indeed, possessed diamonds,<sup>10</sup> but were ignorant of the means of rendering them brilliant; notwithstanding that they employed diamond-dust to polish various other stones. They placed an extraordinary value on amber, which their distance from the coasts of the Baltic sea, where it is chiefly

<sup>9</sup> “ *Three hundred thousand pounds of our money.*” Although the jewels of Lollia Paulina have been estimated, by a very learned author, at the exact sum of 322,916*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.* yet the text of Pliny, on which the calculation is founded, is, by many, considered to admit of a construction which would reduce the valuation to one tenth of that sum. See *Arbutnot on Ancient Coins*.

<sup>10</sup> “ *Diamonds.*” See Note No. 8. Chap. xiii.

found,<sup>11</sup> and their slight intercourse with a country then in a state of barbarism, rendered extremely rare. But the pearl<sup>12</sup> was the most costly jewel, and besides its own intrinsic beauty, and great rarity, its value was enhanced by the difficulty of imitating it; for, although they were adepts in the art of counterfeiting most precious stones, yet to that of making pearl beads, which is now carried to such perfection, they had not attained. Of the excellence of their workmanship, comparatively with that of the moderns, we have but scanty means of forming an accurate opinion; but, from some specimens of ancient jewelry preserved in collections of antiquities, we should conclude, that the Romans had acquired considerable proficiency in the various branches of the lapidary's art.

<sup>11</sup> See *Malte Brun—Picture of Poland*.

<sup>12</sup> "*Pearl*," See Note No. 8. Chap. xiii.

## CHAP. XVII.

Laws to restrain Celibacy.—Papian law.—Marriage.—  
 The Contract.—The Wedding Ring.—The Dowry.—  
 Different forms of Marriage.—Fortunate days.—The  
 Bridal Dress.—Nuptial rites.—The Epithalamium.—  
 The Bed-chamber.

So attentive were the Romans to the important object of population, that, with a view to multiply the number of citizens, they not only rewarded those who married, but decreed penalties against men who remained in a state of celibacy; and sterility was not alone a sufficient ground for divorce, but they whose wives were in that situation were, at one period, enjoined to repudiate them. Fines were first levied on unmarried men about the year of Rome 350; and when pecuniary forfeitures failed to ensure their obedience to these connubial edicts, their contumacious neglect of the fair sex was punished by degradation from their tribe.

Celibacy continued, notwithstanding, to gain ground in Rome; and to counteract its effects, we find that, in the year 518 from the founda-

tion of the city, the censors had recourse to the extraordinary measure of obliging all the young unmarried men to pledge themselves by an oath to marry within a certain time.

Cæsar enacted various laws in order to repair the loss to population occasioned by the civil wars; and Augustus, following his example, augmented the penalties on bachelors, while he bestowed rewards on those who had a numerous offspring born in wedlock. To facilitate marriages, he permitted all male citizens, except senators, their sons and grandsons, to espouse the daughters of freedmen, without such alliance being considered a degradation, in which light it had been previously viewed. And, as many persons evaded the penalties imposed on celibacy, by marrying children under the nubile age, he decreed, that no girl should be betrothed until she had completed her tenth year; and, that the marriage should be consummated within two years afterwards.

Augustus found considerable difficulty in enforcing these laws, which were opposed by the prevalent taste for libertinism, and the general licence of the times; and it was only by dint of perseverance, and great firmness, that he succeeded. At the celebration of some

public games, at which he happened to be present, the knights loudly demanded their abrogation : but the Emperor, instead of complying, sent for the children of Germanicus, who were already numerous, although that prince was then only twenty-four years old, and, holding them up to their view, desired them to follow the example of that illustrious personage. He afterwards commanded the whole order of knights to appear before him in two divisions ; the one to consist of the married, the other of the unmarried ; and finding the latter by far the most numerous, he took occasion to praise those who in honorable wedlock raised up citizens for the state. He then vehemently reprehended the bachelors ; and far from annulling, or even mitigating, the penalties to which they were previously subject, he added some still more rigorous, by a law well known in the Roman code of Jurisprudence, under the title of *Papia Poppæa*, from the consuls Papius and Poppæus, who were charged with its execution, and the somewhat laughable circumstance, that these persons were themselves both unmarried.

Tacitus<sup>1</sup> says, that the object of the Papian law was both to punish celibacy, and to enrich

<sup>1</sup> *Tacit. Ann.* l. iii. c. 25.

the public treasury by the confiscation of collateral successions and legacies; of the benefit of which it deprived unmarried men of the nubile age, unless they contracted a marriage within one hundred days from the decease of the testator. But it gave numerous advantages to fathers of families: they obtained the preference in all public employments; if they had not attained the age required by law, so many years of that period were dispensed with as they had children; distinguished places were assigned to them in the public theatres; they had precedence of their unmarried colleagues; and they were exonerated from the discharge of several burdensome public offices. It was an immunity held in much respect, and was sometimes granted by the emperors, as a special favor, to persons who were without children; but the Emperor Constantine, considering it as, in some respects, contrary to the gospel, modified it in several points, and abolished the penalties imposed on celibacy. The nearest degree of consanguinity in which marriage was legal, subsequent to the reign of Nerva, was that of first cousin: it had been previously permitted, and was frequently contracted, between uncle and niece. By a law of the twelve tables, it was prohibited between

Patricians and Plebeians; but that being contrary to the spirit of republican institutions, it was repealed within five years of its enactment. Marriage with foreigners, of whatever condition, was, however, strictly forbidden. Not only did the national pride of the Romans cause them to look with contempt on the inhabitants of other countries, but the policy of the government tended to preserve the population of the Roman territory as distinct as possible from that of the surrounding nations; and it was besides feared, that such alliances might have consequences prejudicial to the state. Roman citizens were, therefore, required to intermarry among each other, or with the natives of those places which had acquired the burgess-right at Rome, or that of the "*Jus Connubii*,"—the privilege of contracting marriage with the Romans. A man who espoused any other stranger, was looked upon as degraded; and his children were not only considered illegitimate, but, as a mark of still further debasement, they were called *Ibridæ*,—the name applied to animals of a mongrel species. Their condition was, in fact, but little superior to that of slaves, until Caracalla granted the right of naturalization to all the countries, indiscriminately, which composed the

Roman empire; when this stain was, in consequence, obliterated.

A marriage, even within the permitted degrees of propinquity, was not valid, unless the parties had attained the legal age, and were provided with the consent of parents. Boys were considered nubile at fourteen; girls, at twelve. Sons, who had been emancipated by their father, were not subjected to the restraint of obtaining permission; but daughters, although affranchised, were not released from that controul. In order to prevent a too great disparity of years, women under fifty were not allowed to marry sexagenarians, nor men under sixty with women of fifty.

The consent of parents being obtained, the parties were affianced some time before the celebration of the actual marriage. This was accompanied with many ceremonies, at which the priests and augurs assisted: the marriage contract was drawn up in the presence of witnesses, and confirmed by the betrothed pair breaking a straw between them; the bridegroom then presented his bride with the wedding ring; presents were made to the young couple by their immediate friends who were present on the occasion; and the father, or nearest relative of the

bride—at whose house the ceremony usually took place—gave a grand entertainment.

The wedding ring was worn on the third finger of the left hand, from an idea that a nerve communicated thence directly with the heart. It consisted, for a long time, in nothing more than a plain hoop of iron; but it was afterwards made of gold, or bronze, with various amatory mottoes and devices, and frequently with a small ornament in the form of a key, to denote that, with it, the husband delivered up the care of his house.

The bride's portion was paid at three instalments, which were fixed by law, and was either delivered in money or secured on landed property; and the husband was not allowed to alienate it. Among persons of rank, a part of the dowry was reserved for the separate use of the wife, and the lady frequently retained some slaves, as personal servants, who were considered as her private property, and under her sole controul. The fortunes given with young ladies of the first distinction, in the early ages of the republic, were extremely moderate. It is recorded that Cn. Scipio, when in command of the army in Spain, applied for leave of absence, that he might provide for the marriage of his daughter;

but the senate, rather than be deprived of his services, took that care upon itself, and advanced the portion out of the public treasury: its amount was not quite equal to thirty-six pounds of our money! and yet, considering the motive for bestowing it, we may presume that it was not measured with a niggard hand. But in proportion as they were then small, they became enormous in the sequel; and Seneca<sup>2</sup> remarks, that the sum with which the senate portioned the child of Scipio, would not, in his time, have been thought sufficient to provide the daughter of a freed-man with a mirror.

A marriage was never solemnized without consulting the auspices, and offering sacrifices to the gods; particularly to Juno; and the animals immolated on the occasion, were deprived of their gall, in allusion to the absence of every thing bitter and malignant in the proposed union.

The ceremony was performed in three different modes, distinguished by the titles of "*Confarreation*," "*Coemption*," and "*Usage*;" each of which, though distinct in point of form, was equally binding on the contracting parties.

<sup>2</sup> Seneca, *de Consolat. ad Helvet. c. 12.*

on the contrary, was, of all months, considered the most propitious. But widows, whether more careful to improve the passing time, or less attentive to omens, of which the former connubial engagements of many of them had no doubt proved the fallacy, considered every day as equally fortunate, and were married at all seasons.

On the morning of the wedding day, the bride appeared in a simple robe of pure white, bound with a zone of wool, which her husband alone was to loosen; her hair was braided with woollen threads in imitation of the vestals, and divided into six tresses, fastened at the extremities in a knot in the form of a javelin head, and was arranged with the iron of a pike; she wore a large flame-coloured veil, and a chaplet of vervain, gathered by herself; her shoes were yellow, and had unusually high heels, to give her an appearance of greater dignity. Thus attired, she awaited the arrival of the bridegroom, who went, attended by a numerous party of friends, to carry her off, with an appearance of violence, from the arms of her mother, or other nearest female relative; either in commemoration of the rape of the Sabines, or to denote the reluctance she was supposed to feel on quitting the paternal dwelling for that

of a husband. The nuptial ceremony was then performed. In the evening, she was conducted to her future home, followed by her relations, friends, and servants, carrying presents of various domestic utensils; and was attended by three boys, whose parents were still alive, on two of whom she leaned, while the third walked before with a torch of pine-wood, which the friends of both parties carried off when they had arrived at the house, lest it should be employed in any witchery that might endanger the life of either. One young slave carried a covered vase containing her toilet, a child's coral, and play things, and another bore a distaff and spindle furnished with wool; both symbolical of her domestic pleasures, and her cares.

The door of the bridegroom's house was hung with garlands of flowers in honor of the festive occasion; and with wreaths of wool smeared with the fat of a hog, or a wolf, to protect it from witchcraft, the effect of which on the happiness of the newly married pair was as anxiously guarded against as it was seriously dreaded.

When the bride arrived, instead of being received with all the rapture that might be presumed, she was ceremoniously asked who she

was, and was expected to answer, "I am Caia," to assure her husband that she would prove as notable as that celebrated house-wife; or she replied, addressing the bridegroom, "Where thou art Caius, there shall I be Caia," meaning, that where he was master there would she be mistress: a promise which she, no doubt, religiously performed. She was then carried over the threshold, both that she might appear to enter the house involuntarily, and as a presage that she would not quit it but in the same manner: the threshold was, besides, consecrated to the goddess of chastity, and it would have been esteemed a bad omen, were the bride to trample on it. She was sprinkled with water, to denote her virgin purity; and was made to touch both water and fire, along with her husband, to intimate that their union was to last through every extremity. The keys of the house were then delivered to her; and she was seated on a sheep-skin, to remind her, once

• "Caia."—This lady—also known by the name of *Tanaquil*—was the wife of one of the ancient kings; and was so remarkable for attention to the domestic duties, that her distaff was preserved for ages as a sacred relic, and her example was handed down to posterity as a pattern of housewifery.

more, by the emblem of the fleece, of her domestic duties.<sup>6</sup>

The bridegroom then gave a grand supper to all the company: he was himself placed on the upper couch, and the bride reposed upon his breast. This entertainment was distinguished beyond all others by its elegance and profusion; and the sumptuary laws, which fixed bounds to the expence of other repasts, were relaxed in favor of those given on the occasion of a wedding. The fête was accompanied with music and dancing, and the guests sang an epithalamium in praise of the new-married couple. This commenced and finished with acclamations, in which the name of *Thalassius* was often repeated, from an old tradition, that among the Sabine women, carried off by the Romans, there was one of extraordinary beauty, whom the public voice decreed to *Thalassius*, a

<sup>6</sup> "*Domestic duties*."—A popular modern novel has recorded an ancient epitaph on a Roman matron, which shows in what estimation these were held:—

"*Domum mansit, lanam fecit.*"

*The Abbot*, vol. i. ch. 1.

Thus, not unsaply, translated:—

"She kept it close the house, and birlt at the wheel."

*Gawain Hamilton.*

young man also remarkable for his personal graces, and for his courage; and their marriage proving singularly happy, his name was afterwards introduced into the nuptial songs, coupled with wishes that a similar destiny might attend those in whose honor they were chanted.

The bride was attended to her apartment by matrons who had been but once married. The room was ornamented with the statues of the divinities supposed to preside over matrimony; and the bed was strewed with flowers and placed opposite the door, but was removed to another situation if it had already served on a similar occasion, lest the bride should be exposed to the misfortunes that might have befallen its former occupant. Before they retired, the bridegroom scattered nuts among the boys, and the bride consecrated her dolls to Venus, to signify that they relinquished childish amusements; and the bridal rites were closed by a finale to the epithalamium, sung by the young females of the party, at the door of the bed-chamber.

## CHAP. XVIII.

**Ancient Law of Divorce.—Instances of its Abuse.—Its Consequences.—Laws against Adultery.—Widows.—Concubinage.—Laws of Divorce after the Introduction of Christianity.**

**MARRIAGE**, among the Romans, was not indissoluble. By a law of Romulus, a husband might repudiate his wife for several reasons besides that of having violated her conjugal faith: in which cases, he assembled a family council, consisting of the nearest relatives of the lady, to judge of her transgression; and if they found her culpable, a separation was obtained on his making oath before the censors that he demanded it for a legitimate cause.

By an abuse of this power, men were even permitted to repudiate their wives without assigning any real cause; but were then bound, not only to refund the fortune they had received with them, but to endow them, also, with a portion of their own. However equitable this might be so far as it regarded property, it was unjust inasmuch as it was not reciprocal: but

the laws of the twelve tables subsequently gave a parity of rights to the wife, and the sex never afterwards lost an opportunity of asserting them.<sup>1</sup>

The divorce was pronounced in the presence of seven witnesses, and inscribed on the registers of the Censors; the marriage contract was then destroyed, and the husband received back the keys which he had delivered to the wife on the wedding day. On his part, he restored her dowry, unless she had been guilty of infidelity, in which case he retained the whole; but if criminal in a minor degree, only a part; and if they had children, they settled a portion of their joint fortune on them, by a testamentary deed which was irrevocable.

There were some additional forms of separation, each peculiar to the different rites by which the marriage had been contracted, but they all equally ended in an unceremonious order to the lady to "take up her property and depart."

<sup>1</sup> On one occasion, when an unfounded report was circulated that a decree was about to be passed permitting men to have two wives, a deputation of matrons instantly waited on the Senate to claim the privilege of marrying two husbands.

It has been remarked, to the honor of the Romans, that more than four centuries elapsed without any suit among them for divorce, or complaint of adultery. That crime was first publicly noticed in the year 457 of the commonwealth, when some ladies were suspected of it, and condemned in fines which were employed to build a temple to Venus. It was not until the year 521, of the same æra, that the first divorce took place; when one Carvilius Ruga repudiated his wife on account of sterility. He was said to be much attached to her; and he excused his conduct on the plea, that he was only induced to take that step out of respect to the oath which he, in common with his fellow-citizens, had taken,—to marry for the purpose of having children: but, however specious the pretext, it did not fail to draw down upon him the public indignation of all Rome.

His example, however, was soon followed, and divorces afterwards took place upon the most frivolous pretences. One repudiated his wife for having appeared in public without a veil; another, because she was seen to whisper to a freedman; a third, in consequence of the lady having appeared at the theatre without his permission; and a fourth, assigned no other

reason than "no one knew where the buskin pinched but the wearer." Even Cato did not scruple to yield his wife Marcia, by whom he had several children, to his friend Hortensius; and he dying soon after, and constituting Marcia his sole heiress, to the exclusion of his son, Cato remarried her to possess himself of the fortune. Cicero divorced Terentia, on account, as he alleged, of her imperious temper and extravagance; although he had cohabited thirty years with her, and they had two children to whom he was most tenderly attached. He then married a young heiress to whom he had been guardian, and repudiated her, also, within a short period, on the pretext of some family dispute. In fine, some men were base enough to marry women of light character, with a view to take advantage of their misconduct, and thus to possess themselves of their dowry, which, as we have already seen, was forfeited to the husband in cases of infidelity. Nor were the women slow in taking advantage of the privilege they also acquired of releasing themselves at pleasure from their bonds: they frequently deserted their husbands without cause, and contracted new engagements which they broke with equal levity; insomuch, that a celebrated mo-

ralist remarked of them, "that they no longer counted the years by the names of the consuls, but by those of their different husbands." The slightest disgust, or even caprice, served as an excuse to either party to resort to this convenient expedient, which became so general, that St. Jerome mentions a Roman who had had *twenty wives*; and a lady *twenty-two husbands*!

But, either the pious indignation of the saint has exaggerated the fact, or the prevailing taste for variety had encreased with its indulgence; for Juvenal, who wrote at a much earlier period,<sup>2</sup> and who certainly cannot be accused of extenuating the frailties of the fair-sex, limits the

<sup>2</sup> "A celebrated moralist."—Seneca, *De Benefic.* l. iii. c. 16. It was customary to designate any particular year by the names of the consuls who were then in office.

<sup>3</sup> "Juvenal, who wrote at a much earlier period."—St. Jerome wrote in the latter end of the fourth, and the beginning of the fifth centuries: Juvenal towards the close of the first, and in the early part of the second. The latter was cotemporary with Seneca, Tacitus, Pliny the Elder and Younger, Suetonius, Plutarch, Persius, and Martial; and was preceded—by about a century—by the historian Livy, and by Ovid, Virgil, and Horace.

inconstancy of the ladies of his time to a much smaller number :—

“ Anon she sickens of her first domains,  
And seeks for new ; husband on husband takes,  
Till of her bridal veil one rent she makes.  
Again she tires, again for change she burns,  
And to the bed she lately left returns,  
While the fresh garlands, and unfaded boughs,  
Yet deck the portal of her wondering spouse.  
Thus swells the list; EIGHT HUSBANDS IN FIVE YEARS:  
A rare inscription for their sepulchres ! ”

*Gifford, sat. vi.*

This facility of divorce had the most baleful effect on society : instead of encreasing the reciprocal attentions and complaisance of married persons, from a dread of its being resorted to, it encreased their dissensions, by removing the restraint which the necessity of passing their lives together might otherwise have imposed upon them ; it destroyed that mutual confidence which forms the basis of happiness in the married state ; and opened a wide field for discord, and irregularity of conduct. The Emperor Augustus made some efforts to check it, by imposing certain penalties upon divorces without legitimate cause. He also promulgated an edict

against adultery. We are ignorant of its precise tenor; but it would appear, that, besides the punishment of whipping, banishment, and, in some cases, of mutilation, to which it exposed the parties, it added to the laws already in force — which allowed the husband to put the wife and her paramour to death if surprised in the fact — permission to the father, also, of the woman, to kill her seducer. But however severe its enactments, and whatever the attention of Augustus to enforce them, they wanted the powerful aid of example; and his own irregularities were too notorious not to weaken the effect of a law which he was himself the first to infringe.\*

Public opinion, however, which generally de-

\* *"A law which he was himself the first to infringe."* Augustus repudiated his wife, Scribonia, on the very day on which she was delivered of the afterwards celebrated and dissolute Julia. His object in this divorce, was, to marry Livia, then not only the wife of Tiberius Nero, but also, six months advanced in pregnancy. The lady's marriage was an impediment easily removed; but her situation might have opposed some legal difficulty, had not the pliant casuistry of the college of Pontiffs seconded the emperor's impatience. She became empress: but her child was duly restored to her former husband.

cides justly on points of morality, was unfavorable to divorces. Even second marriages, by widows, were not held in much respect: wherefore they were usually solemnized with but little parade, and publicity was as much shunned, on those occasions, as it was courted on the celebration of the espousals of a maiden. Widowhood, on the contrary, was in such honor, that it commanded precedence in certain solemn ceremonies; the crown of chastity was decreed to it; and the title of *Univira* was engraved, as an eulogium, on the tombs of those matrons who remained faithful to their first vows. But we may infer from the honors paid to those widows who thus cherished the memory of their early loves, that their number was not large: the common actions of life, however meritorious they may be, are seldom distinguished by extraordinary marks of consideration, and it is only when they are rare that they attract observation. They were prohibited from contracting another marriage during the period of their mourning; but if they transgressed in this particular, the fault was to be expiated by the sacrifice of an in-calf cow.

Widowers were not so restricted: they remarried when they pleased: but many, without

any libertine intention, and solely out of consideration for their children, and to avoid giving them a step-mother and co-heirs, contracted a kind of half-marriage, which was recognized by the Roman law, under the title of *concubinage*. The offspring of such a connexion were not, indeed, considered legitimate, with respect to the succession to property; but neither were they reputed spurious; nor was their mother looked upon as infamous; and they were competent to fill public employments, from which illegitimate children were excluded. But this indulgence was never extended so far as to authorise polygamy; and even a plurality of concubines, though connived at by the licence of the times, was strictly prohibited by law. Plutarch, indeed, observes, that Mark Antony was the *first* Roman who emancipated himself from this restraint, and married *two wives*:<sup>3</sup> but he cites no other instance in support of the inference which might be drawn from the manner in which he expresses himself—that others had followed the example; and, as the allusion is to his marriage with Cleopatra, which was not solemnized at Rome, it cannot be considered as a case

<sup>3</sup> *Plut. in Vit. Ant.*

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strictly in point. Besides, as no ceremony could legalize such marriages, they could not confer any rights on the offspring; and, if they ever took place, they were void in law, and did not affect its regulations: but we do not find that they subjected the parties to any punishment.

It is remarkable, that notwithstanding Christianity became the religion of the State in the year of our Lord 311, yet the law which sanctioned divorce at the pleasure of either party continued in force until the year 450, when some restrictions were imposed on the extreme facility with which it had till then been allowed, and the legitimate causes of separation were defined. However, the reasons for which it was still permitted, were so numerous, were afterwards so frequently modified, and so variously construed, and gave rise to so much litigation, that, in the year 570, the Emperor Justin II. restored the law of divorce by mutual consent; and marriage remained thus dissoluble until the fall of the Roman Empire.

## CHAP. XIX.

**Power of Parents over their Children.—Exposition.—  
Emancipation.—Gradual Restriction of Parental Au-  
thority.—Clans.—Names.—Adoption of Children.—  
Manner and Progress of Education.**

IN all uncivilized ages, the most unlimited power appears to have been exercised by parents over their children. The barbarous custom of exposing them was common among the ancients, and was established by law, at Sparta, by Lycurgus. There, when a child was born, it was visited by the elders of each tribe, and if, upon examination, it was found well-formed and vigorous, they ordered that it should be reared; but, if it appeared weak or deformed, it was either immediately destroyed, or exposed on the highway to the casual charity of the passing stranger. Such was also the practice of the ancient Romans. But Romulus, so far from rendering it imperative on parents to expose their children, in any case, restricted their right to do so until the infant had attained the age of

three years ; in the double hope, that both the child, and their affection for it, might, in that time, acquire strength sufficient to avert the fate which otherwise awaited it. This humane law, although confirmed by those of the twelve tables, was, however, continually evaded ; and, although absolute child-murder was not, perhaps, often committed, yet the exposition of infants was customary at Rome, not only during the early period of its history, but for many succeeding ages.

But, that this unnatural practice was rather prompted by the pressure of indigence than by any worse motive, may be presumed from the facts, that the children were usually exposed in those places where they would be most likely to attract observation and to excite compassion, and that care was generally taken to affix some mark to them by which they might be afterwards recognised.

In all other respects, the authority with which the Roman laws invested parents was unbounded. Fathers were not alone empowered to exact the services of their children in what manner they pleased, and to punish their disobedience by corporal chastisement, but also to imprison them, to sell them, and even, in cases of gross miscon-

duct, to put them to death. They were, in fact, their masters, and their judges, and could dispose at pleasure of their persons, and property. Nor was their dominion over them confined to the age of childhood, but extended to every period of their lives; except, indeed, that the earnings of a son in the army, or at the bar, were beyond their control, and that daughters were emancipated from it by marriage. The power of a father over his son was, in fact, still more absolute than that of a master over his slave; for the latter could be only once sold, and if afterwards liberated, he was then for ever free. But, paradoxical as it may appear, a son might be sold three times; for, if freed by the person to whom he was first transferred, he reverted to his father, and it was not until he had been thus thrice sold and emancipated, that he obtained his final liberty. His children also, partaking of his condition, were equally subjected to the authority of their grandfather; and thus the power of the father himself yielded to the superior dominion of his own parent. In compliance with this extraordinary ordinance, when a father chose to emancipate his son, he made a formal sale of him three different times, and repurchased him as often; which being

done in the presence of a magistrate and five witnesses, the young man was thenceforward his own master : but the profits, or interest, of half his property belonged to the father, who was also his heir if he died intestate, and the legal guardian of his children after his decease.

There is, however, reason to suppose, that some restraints were imposed on the exercise of this arbitrary power, even in the time of the republic ; there certainly were by the emperors ; and, indeed, the existence of such absolute authority, in the hands of individuals, seems to be incompatible with the spirit of monarchical government. At a very early period, the right of selling male children was restricted to the unmarried sons, lest married free-women should be reduced to slavery through the necessities, the caprice, or the inhumanity, of their fathers-in-law. Trajan emancipated a son who had been ill-treated by his father ; and Hadrian banished a father who had killed his son on the bare suspicion of his having committed adultery. From that time, the dominion of fathers over their children was daily diminished. They gradually lost the power of life and death, and then that of selling them. The latter, it is true, was permitted so late as the reign of the first

Constantine; but it was only allowed in cases of pressing necessity, and was confined to children newly born. The continuance of it, even under that restriction, appears to have been admitted more with a view to guard infants from destruction by necessitous parents, than as an acknowledgement of the right; and the same law obliged the purchaser to restore the child to liberty, at any future period, on repayment of the sum for which it had been sold. But, notwithstanding these safeguards, the permission was abused, and was, in consequence, finally abolished in the same reign: Constantine, to avoid all future pretext for it, ordaining at the same time, that indigent parents should be supported at the public expense. The unnatural custom of exposing children, was also prohibited under severe penalties; but the precise period when it actually ceased to be practised does not appear: that it was not abolished without difficulty may be inferred from the same prohibition having been renewed, with additional severities, by several succeeding emperors.

History contains many revolting instances of the abuse of the powers with which fathers were invested; and it was doubtless owing to their having been exercised with undue severity, that

they were annulled. But it must also be admitted, that the dependance in which children were held, served to nourish that filial piety of which Rome furnished so many striking examples; that it was a strong inducement to parents to attend to the education of their offspring, and to watch over their conduct in more mature life; and, that it tended to the maintenance of order in families, and of subordination in the state. That mothers were not allowed to participate in the fathers' prerogative, was the consequence of their own dependance on their husbands; and also, we must suppose, of that softness of disposition which would have rendered the exercise of such stern authority impossible to their gentler nature.

Boys were named on the ninth, and girls on the eighth, day after their birth: but they then only received the family patronymic: the pre-name, or, as we should term it, the baptismal, or christian-name, was not bestowed on the former, until they were invested with the toga, nor on the latter, until they were about to be married; and indeed, at a more recent period, females did not receive any pre-name. When there were two daughters in a family, they were merely distinguished as the elder and the

younger ; but if more, they were named, according to the order of their birth,—*Secundilla*, *Tertulla*, *Quartilla*—the numbers being always, in such case, used in the diminutive, for the greater tenderness of expression ; and sometimes the name also, as *Tulliola* for *Tullia*. When married, they retained the name of their family, and did not adopt that of their husband.

Those great families among the Romans who traced their origin to one common ancestor, were considered as belonging to the same *Gens*, or Clan ; but they did not, on that account, bear the same name alone as the parent stock from which they were descended. The acknowledged kindred of a *Gens* were denominated *Gentiles*, as a recognition of the alliance ; and as it denoted an honorable descent, and the pride of ancestry prevailed in a very high degree, it was a distinction held in much respect. Many of the most ancient and illustrious family-names were derived from the rustic occupations of their ancestors : thus, according to Varro, Pliny, Plutarch, and others, the noble families *Asinia*, *Porcia*, and *Vitellia*, were so called from their progenitors having been celebrated breeders of the animals to which their names have an affinity ; as those of *Fabius*, *Lentulus*, *Piso*,

and Cicero, were, no doubt, equally remarkable for the successful cultivation of leguminous plants.

They had two, or three, and sometimes, even four, names: the *pre-name*,—*name*,—*surname*,—and an additional title, which they termed the *agnomen*.

The *pre-name*, which, as we have already observed, corresponded with our christian-name, was seldom written at full length: the initial letter alone being used, or, at most, the first syllable, if it consisted of more than one. The *pre-names* of females were distinguished from those of men by the initials being inverted; by which expedient the confusion was obviated that must otherwise have arisen from the similarity of the male and female appellatives, which seldom differed except in the termination.

The name, was that of the original family, or gens: and the sur-name,—which, in its origin, was a title, or honorable distinction, and sometimes a mere nick-name,—denoted the different branches of the same house.

The *agnomen* was personal to the individual who bore it, without reference to his family, and was usually conferred as a reward for some memorable action: thus the two Scipios were,

in consequence of their military services, called, the one *Africanus*, and the other *Asiaticus*. This distinction was, however, afterwards much abused; for, notwithstanding that it could only be granted by the senate, and was so highly valued, that even the emperors were ambitious of acquiring it, yet was it frequently bestowed without any regard to merit.

The Romans also inserted their public employments and dignities, and frequently, even their tribe, among their names. The title of the latter was feminine, and was placed between the name and the sur-name; but, lest it should be mistaken for a sur-name, or the name of a female, they distinguished it, in writing, by a different size, or form, of the character. They, sometimes, had two sur-names; or rather, the name of one family, and the hereditary sur-name of another: this occurred in cases of adoption; and when strangers became citizens of Rome, they usually took the pre-name and name of him who had procured them that privilege. Slaves also, when liberated, added the name and pre-name of their master to their own sur-name: thus, the poet *Andronicus*, the freed-man of *Marcus Livius Salinator*, was called *M. Livius Andronicus*.

The adoption of children was very general among those who were themselves childless; and, as they became the legal heirs of their adoptive fathers, so, these acquired over them all the rights of paternity. The adopted person took the name of the family into which he was received, in addition to his own; thus preserving some trace of his real origin, while he became identified with his new connexions.

There were three distinct modes of adoption: *simple affiliation*, that called *arrogation*, and *testamentary adoption*; each of which was accompanied with certain forms to render it valid.

The first was resorted to on the adoption of a minor, and was effected by a fictitious sale from the real to the adoptive parent, in the same manner as in cases of emancipation.

Arrogation regarded those who, being their own masters, voluntarily submitted themselves to the authority of him who adopted them. For this the consent of the people was requisite, and it was demanded by a public notification.

Besides these forms, three other conditions were essential to give effect to either of those acts:—that the adoptive father should be at least eighteen years older than the son, and that he should both be without children of his own,

and without reasonable hope of having any; that neither honor, religion, the domestic worship or peculiar sacrifices of the two families, should receive any attaint by it; that it was without fraud, or collusion; and, that it had no other object than the apparent one of a bona fide adoption. The consideration of these conditions belonged to the college of Pontiffs; and if they approved the demand, it was at once admitted in the case of simple affiliation, and referred to the general assembly of the people in that of arrogation: but the emperors took this right into their own hands, and extended it so far as to give permission of adoption to women who were childless.

Testamentary adoption was nothing more than the bequest of a man's inheritance and name; but even this required to be confirmed, by the Prætor in the testator's life-time, or by the people after his death.

Various reasons contributed to render adoption more frequent among the Romans than among any other people: one, was the desire, and even the sacred obligation, of perpetuating the private worship and distinctive sacrifices belonging to their families; another, the privileges enjoyed by fathers, which attached equally

to those having adopted, or legitimate, children; and lastly, among the patricians, was the eligibility to the important office of tribune of the people, from which they were excluded unless they had previously passed, by adoption, into the plebeian order. The two latter motives gave occasion for many collusive adoptions, for interested purposes. We may readily conceive, that it could only have been a mere matter of form when a patrician was adopted by a plebeian: but it was also resorted to at the approach of the elections for public offices, to qualify those who, being without children, could not otherwise have entered into competition with fathers of families; and once their object was thus attained, they emancipated those whom they had adopted. This abuse, however, received a check in the reign of Nero, in consequence of a remonstrance from the real fathers, who complained, with great justice, that they, who had suffered all the anxious cares of paternity, were frustrated of their rights by the fraudulent intervention of men who suddenly acquired the title of parent, without fulfilling any of its duties, or feeling any of its solitudes.

The mode of education generally adopted at

Rome, varied, at different periods of the republic, according to the changes which the manners of the people underwent through the introduction of commerce and the sciences, and the progress of luxury and refinement. While war and agriculture formed the chief occupations, it had little other object than the attainment of those arts, and was wholly achieved under the paternal roof; every father being then capable of instructing his sons in the use of arms and the practice of husbandry, and every mother conveying to her daughters, in her own example, those practical lessons of housewifery to which their simple acquirements were confined. Even those young men whose rank entitled them to aspire to civic honors, required but little previous instruction to enable them to fulfill the duties of the magistracy. There were but few written laws before the promulgation of those of the twelve tables, and these the most simple and definite; but suited to that rude state of society in which most of its members were unacquainted with the arts of reading and writing,<sup>1</sup> and in which the limited nature of

*“Most of its members were unacquainted with the arts of reading and writing.”*—At that early period, a brazen stud was annually affixed to the gate of the temple of

property gave rise to but little collision of interests. But when an intercourse with the Greeks had inspired the people with a taste for the fine arts, and the accumulation of wealth had diffused its attendant polish over their habits of life, then arms and the sciences were equally cultivated; a more liberal form of education was adopted; and public schools were opened for the reception of the youth of both sexes.

It was a maxim with the Romans, that education should keep pace with the progress of intellect from its earliest dawn: instruction, therefore, commenced the moment children gave signs of comprehension. At this period, they were confided to the care of some matron of the family, whose chief duty it was, to watch over their growing passions, and to correct them; to direct their inclinations; and to give them habits of order and obedience. As they advanced in age and reason, their instructress inculcated the precepts of morality, and, above

Jupiter to commemorate the number of the revolving years; and when the progress of literature had rendered such a record unnecessary, the ceremony was still continued, and performed with great pomp by the consuls, as a religious act to avert public calamities.

all, endeavoured to inspire them with the principles which formed the true character of the Roman citizen:—veneration for the gods; submission to parents; attachment to the constitution, and the cause of liberty; and love of their country. They were then instructed in literature at some public seminary; and as they grew towards manhood, they were habituated to all the athletic exercises that could impart agility or grace, and fit them for the profession of arms. Nor were the accomplishments of polished life neglected: both sexes were taught the lute, and the cithara, and their manners and deportment were carefully attended to.

When the period allotted to the studies of youth had elapsed, and they were invested with the virile robe, young men of family were placed under the protection of some senator of distinguished reputation for his knowledge of jurisprudence. Although not considered as a preceptor, he afforded them the benefit of his advice and example, and under his auspices they were initiated into public business, and acquired a practical knowledge of the laws.

Eloquence, and the military art, were the surest roads to preferment; and the character of an able orator, or soldier, led to the first digni-

ties of the state. They placed these qualities nearly on a level; this, as defending the republic from its enemies abroad; that, as providing for its security at home.

Eloquence was taught, as a science, at public schools, where composition and declamation were studied in both the Greek and Latin languages. The study of the Greek was not only fashionable, but was considered as, in some measure, necessary in a country which had derived its literature from Greece;<sup>2</sup> and it was usual with persons of high consequence, to entertain some Grecian man of letters in their house for the instruction of their children, and to allow him to receive pupils, also, from among the young nobility. It was also customary for young men of rank to complete their education at Athens; or at Marseilles, which at that period contained a very learned university.

The youth, of every condition, were not alone trained to arms, and inured to the fatigues of

<sup>2</sup> “*Derived its literature from Greece.*” It is remarkable that, although Latin was spoken throughout the foreign possessions of the Roman Empire, it never became the exclusive language of all Italy, in the southern provinces of which the Greek continued predominant until long after the fall of the Western Empire.

war, by the exercises we have already mentioned as forming part of their education, but afterwards, also, in the Campus Martius on their assuming the toga; and when they joined the army, they were employed, indiscriminately, in the most laborious duties of the camp and the field. "Thus formed," says Sallust, "no toil fatigued, no difficulty disheartened, no danger dismayed them: their courage was superior to all. No combat so animating to them as that in which they contended for the prize of glory: to charge the enemy, to scale a fortress, to distinguish themselves by some daring action, and make themselves respected for their valor—this was their ambition; and in fame alone they placed both honor, riches, and true nobility."<sup>3</sup> This ardor for military glory was at once the cause, and the effect, of the justly great reputation of the Roman arms; and we may judge from the exaggerated praises bestowed on it, by the author just quoted, how sedulously it was nourished, and with what enthusiasm it was sustained.

The education of females, also, became an object of equal attention. No longer confined to subjects of domestic economy, it ex-

<sup>3</sup> *Sall. Bell. Cat. in proam.*

tended to both Greek and Latin literature, and the cultivation of every grace and talent with which the sex is so eminently gifted. Formed to embellish life, no sooner were women emancipated from the trammels of domestic slavery, in which they had been held, than they acquired an influence—more felt, indeed, than acknowledged—which gradually refined the manners of the men, and shed its lustre over society: while, availing themselves of the sources of information newly opened to them, they successfully improved their own natural powers of intellect, and many Roman ladies made a distinguished figure in the republic of letters.

Such were the cares which the Romans bestowed upon the education of their youth: no people ever carried them farther: hence the number of truly great men, and eminent women, which Rome has produced, and the virtues by which they were adorned, during the brilliant æra of the republic. Happy if their history could be closed with that epoch: but the tide of luxury which was afterwards admitted, swept away every vestige of the morality of conduct and real dignity of manners, the simple elegance and social intercourse of domestic life, by which they had been distinguish-

ed; and introduced a train of debasing vices, a frothy superficial deportment, with a vulgar ostentation and disgusting profusion, accompanied by the meanness ever attendant on prodigality. The accounts transmitted to us of the luxury of Rome during the latter reigns of the emperors, may excite our astonishment, but can neither command our respect, nor admiration; and if we sympathize in her fall, it is because the refulgence of her ancient glory throws a ray of illusive brightness over the gloom of her final degeneracy.

## CHAP. XX.

**Funeral Rites.—Inhumation.—Custom of Burning the Dead.—Attentions to the Dying.—The last Obsequies.—Sepulture.—The Funeral Pyre.—Sacrifices.—Gladiatorial Combats.—Mourning.—Tombs.—Monumental Inscriptions.**

THE simple affections of nature, independently of all civil and moral obligations, have, in every stage of society, dictated the last attentions to the remains of departed friends. Neither law nor religion has prescribed the forms in which they are paid. They grow out of sentiments of public decorum and private regard, and, springing rather from the heart than from the mind, are sanctioned by one common feeling; while the solemnity by which they are surrounded guards them from the innovations to which the less impressive actions of life are exposed. Thus, they survive the common usages of society; exist when other customs coeval with them have ceased; and are but slowly exchanged for newer ceremonies.

During the greater part of the commonwealth, the only mode of disposing of the dead, among the Romans, was by inhumation. At a

very remote period, it is said to have been customary with them, to inter the chief persons in a family in their own houses : to which has been attributed much of that superstitious awe of departed spirits which formed so prominent a feature in the Roman character. But the fact itself, not only rests upon rather weak authority, but is in contradiction with one of their most settled prejudices; and the consequence deduced from it may, with more probability, be attributed to the form of their religion, and to that bias of the mind to dwell on supernatural objects which seems to belong to all unenlightened ages.

The custom of burning the dead, though very anciently practised among the Greeks, and of great antiquity among the Romans, was not generally adopted by the latter until towards the close of the republic; but it afterwards became universal, and was continued uninterruptedly until the introduction of Christianity, soon after which it gradually fell into disuse.

Although the anxious solicitude with which affection guards departing friends—immutable as our nature, and uninfluenced by the vicissitudes of fashion—has been the same in every age and every clime, yet, the very impulse which directs it has given birth to various

forms, as final demonstrations of respect and tokens of regard. Among the Romans, the bed of the dying was never abandoned to hireling attendants, but was surrounded by relatives and intimates who lavished every endearing attention due to the melancholy occasion. As life began to ebb, they, in succession, and in accents of the deepest sorrow, bade a long farewell to their expiring friend; and, when the last awful moment approached, the nearest relation present closed the eyes, while, from an idea that the soul was exhaled in the last sigh, he bent over the body to catch the parting breath. The corpse was then bathed and perfumed; dressed in the most costly robes belonging to the deceased; and laid out in the vestibule,<sup>1</sup> on a couch strewn with flowers, with the feet towards the outer door, which was shaded with branches of cypress.

From that strange mixture of celestial attributes and earthly propensities in which the heathen mythology clothed its deities, it was a

<sup>1</sup> “*The vestibule.*”—This must not be understood in the modern acceptance of the term. It was, in fact, an open space, within the enclosure of the outer wall, but before the house itself:—“*locus vacuus ante Januam domus, per quem à viâ ad Ædes itur.*” Aul. Gell. l. xvi. c. 5.—See Chap. iv. p. 52.

received opinion, that Charon would not convey the departed spirit across the Styx without payment of an ancient toll to which he had become entitled by long established usage: a small coin was, in consequence, placed in the mouth of the deceased, to satisfy the demand of the stern ferryman.

The funeral took place by torch-light. The corpse was carried, with the feet foremost, on an open bier covered with the richest cloth, and borne by the nearest relatives and most distinguished friends. The procession was regulated by a director of the ceremonies, attended by lictors dressed in black and bearing their fasces inverted; and, if the deceased had been a military man, the insignia of his rank were displayed, and the corps to which he had belonged marched in the train with their arms reversed. The body was preceded by the image of the deceased, together with those of his ancestors; then went musicians with wind-instruments of a larger size and deeper tone than those used on less solemn occasions, and mourning women who were hired to sing his praises; before whom were dancers and buffoons, one of whom represented the character of the dead man, and endeavoured to imitate his manner when alive. The family of the deceased followed

the bier in deep mourning ; the sons with their heads covered, the daughters unveiled and with their hair dishevelled, magistrates without their badges, and patricians without their ornaments: his freedmen, with the cap of liberty on their heads, closed the procession.

The obsequies of persons of rank were distinguished by a funeral oration in their honor, which was pronounced over the body by some near friend. This ceremony took place in the forum, and was, during the republic, a mark of consideration conferred only on distinguished personages, and by order of the senate ; but, under the emperors, it became general, as a tribute of private respect and affection, and was bestowed on women as well as men.

While the practice of sepulture prevailed, the body was either interred without a coffin, or deposited in a sarcophagus, the form of which was that of a deep chest. On the conclusion of the ceremony, the sepulchre was strewed with flowers, and the mourners took a last farewell of the honored remains. The attendants were then sprinkled with water by a priest, to purify them from the pollution which the ancients supposed to be communicated by any contact with a corpse ; and all were dismissed.

When the custom of burning the body was

introduced, a funeral pyre, of wood and other combustible materials, was raised in the semblance of an altar, on which the bier was placed, with the corpse outstretched upon it, and the eyes opened. The procession then moved slowly round to the sound of solemn music, while the mourning matrons, who attended—

“ With baleful cypress and blue fillets crown'd,  
With eyes dejected, and with hair unbound,”

chanted a requiem to the deceased; and the nearest relative, advancing from the train with a lighted torch, and averting his face from the body, set fire to the awful pile. Perfumes and spices were then thrown into the blaze by the surrounding friends, and, when the fire was extinguished, the embers were quenched with wine. The ashes were then collected, and enclosed in an urn of costly workmanship, which was afterwards deposited in the mausoleum of the family. When the solemnities were in honor of a man of high rank, they were accompanied with much military pomp; and if a soldier, his arms, and the spoils he had taken from the enemy, were added to the funeral fire.

It was a received opinion among the ancients, that the manes of the deceased were propitiated by blood: wherefore it was always their custom

to slaughter, on the tomb of the deceased, those animals to which he was, while living, most attached; and in the more remote and barbarous ages, men were the victims of this horrid superstition:—

“ Arms, trappings, horses—by the hearse were led  
In long array—the achievements of the dead.  
Then pinion'd, with their hands behind, appear  
The unhappy captives, marching in the rear,  
Appointed offerings in the victor's name,  
To sprinkle with their blood the funeral flame.”

*Dryden's Virg. Æn. b. xi.*

Nor were these human sacrifices always confined to captives taken in war: domestic slaves were sometimes immolated to their masters, and there are instances on record of friends having thus devoted themselves from motives of affection. In process of time this savage rite gave way to one scarcely less revolting, and in lieu of it, they adopted that of the gladiatorial combats, which continued, until their final abolition, to form part of the last solemnities.\*

The period of mourning, on the part of men, or of distant relatives, was short. Widows were bound to mourn for their husbands during an entire year. But the edict which ordained

\* See Pliny's Letters, b. iv. ep. 2, and b. vii. ep. 24.

this outward demonstration of respect to the memory of their deceased lords, was promulgated when the year consisted of only ten lunar months; and the widows—doubtless nourishing in their bosoms “that grief which passeth show”—were ever satisfied to construe the law according to its strictest acceptation. Their mourning, therefore, lasted, in fact, only nine calendar months, during which time they laid aside every kind of ornament, and dressed—during the time of the republic, in black; but afterwards, in white.

Neither sepulture, nor the more common obsequies, were allowed within the walls of the city, except to the vestal virgins, and to some families of high distinction whose ancestors had acquired that privilege as a public testimony of their services to the state. This prohibition was not alone dictated by precaution for the health of the inhabitants, or for the safety of the town, which might have been endangered, either by putrid exhalations from the interred bodies, or by the flames of funeral fires; but, also, by an idea, very generally entertained by the nations of antiquity, that the place in which a corpse was deposited was defiled.

The tombs of military men, and of persons of rank, were usually raised in the field of Mars,

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and those of individuals of more private station, in the gardens of their villas; or, frequently, by the side of the public road, that thus their remains might attract the observation, and their spirit receive the valediction, of the passing traveller. Many of these ancient sepulchres still exist, engraven with various monumental inscriptions recording the virtues of the deceased, and the respect of surviving friends: those on the splendid mausoleums of the great generally display a pompous detail of the titles and the qualities by which they were distinguished, and are often but faithless memorials of their real character; while the more simple effusions of affection on the lowly tombs of the humble, seldom contain more, than a memento to the reader of his own mortality, and to the dead, the artless wish—"may the earth lie light on thee!"

"Shades of our sires! O sacred be your rest,  
And lightly lie the turf upon your breast!  
Flowers round your urns breathe sweets beyond compare,  
And spring eternal shed its influence there!

*Gifford's Juvenal, sat vii.*

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HENRY DAVID HILL, D. D.

*Professor of Greek in the University of St. Andrew's.*

“ To young persons who are just entering upon the higher classics, and to studious men who are desirous of repairing, by their own industry, the accidental defects of an imperfect education, a more useful assistant, we think, cannot well be furnished. The style throughout is neat, easy, and perspicuous; the text (as we always wish to see it in elementary works) is undisturbed by notes; but at the end of every Essay is subjoined a list of authorities, confirming the opinion which the author has advanced in it, and affording references to works in which the subject of each essay may be still further prosecuted.”

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